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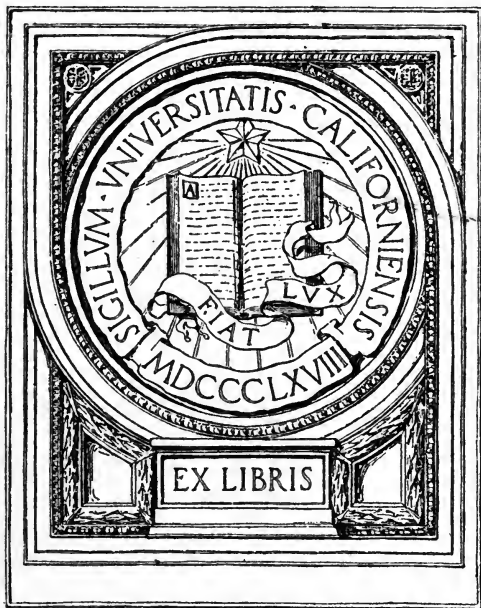
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Songs of the Army of the Night

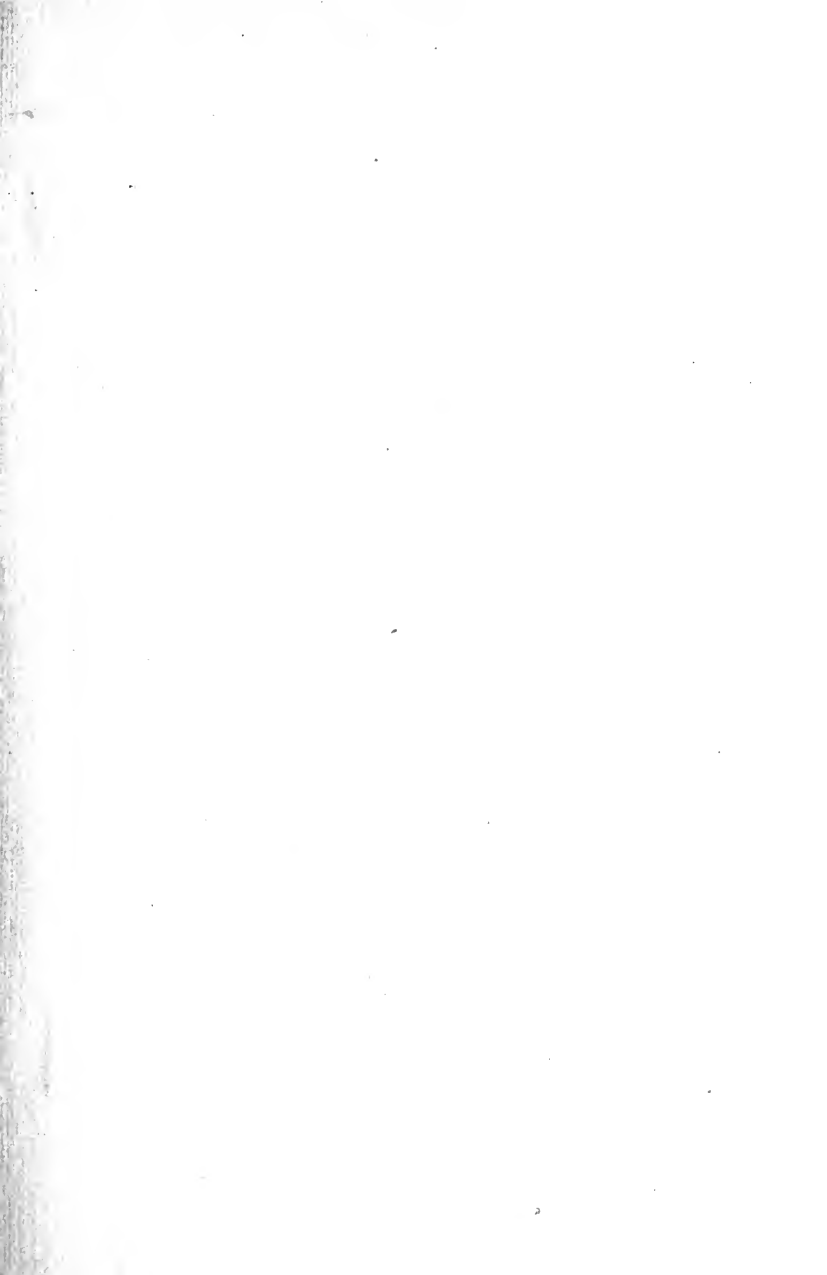
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Songs of
The Army of the Night

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Songs of the
Army of the Night
and
The Mass of Christ

By
Francis Adams

New and revised edition



New York :
Mitchell Kennerley, 2 East 29th Street
1910

Handwritten text, possibly a signature or date, oriented diagonally.

Handwritten text, possibly a date or initials.

Sept 17 1880
A. B. C. D. E. F. G. H. I. J. K. L. M. N. O. P. Q. R. S. T. U. V. W. X. Y. Z.

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Editor's Note

FRANCIS ADAMS'S book of revolutionary verse, the "Songs of the Army of the Night," originally published in Australia in 1887, was reproduced in London, with a few omissions, three years later. When Adams died, he left two revised copies of the "Songs," into which he had written the spirited "England in Egypt" and a few other poems; and from one of these copies was printed the posthumous volume of 1894. That book having been out of print for some years, a new edition has now been called for; and in preparing it I have ventured to follow its author's example and to omit a few poems (chiefly from the Australian section) which are no longer relevant. On the other hand I have inserted, at the place which he assigned to it, the remarkable poem entitled "The Mass of Christ," which for some reason was not previously included.

A few biographical facts and dates may serve to make some of the references in the "Songs of the Army of the Night" more intelligible. Francis Adams was Scotch by extraction, the son of Professor Leith Adams, a scientist and army surgeon. Born at Malta, where his father's regiment was stationed, on September 27th, 1862, he spent his childhood in England, New Brunswick, and Ireland. He was educated at Shrewsbury School (the "Colchester" described in his autobiographical novel, "A Child of the Age"), and after spending two or three years in Paris and London became an assistant master at Ventnor College in 1882. Two years later he married and went to Australia, where he busied himself in literary, educational, and political work, and was on the staff of the *Sydney Bulletin*. His wife having died in Australia, his second marriage took place there in 1887, and in the same year he went on a short voyage to China and Japan. In 1890 he returned to England, much broken in health, and his last two winters were spent in

the Riviera and Egypt. He died, by his own hand, at Margate on September 4th, 1893.

Gifted with great natural vitality, both physical and mental, Adams found himself at an early age the victim of inherited consumption, and his short life was the incessant struggle of a proud and courageous spirit against poverty and disease. Thus it was that the sensitiveness of his intensely high-strung temperament, sharpened by suffering and disappointment, found such poignant expression in these keen fierce lyrics, on fire alike with love and with hate, which express the passionate sympathies and deep resentments of the modern revolutionary movement somewhat as Elliott's "Corn Law Rhymes" and Brough's "Songs of the Governing Classes" spoke the troubled spirit of their time. For Adams, unlike Morris, was not so much a convert to Socialism as a scion of Socialism, a veritable "Child of the Age" in the storm and stress of his career; and unequal as his "Songs" are, when judged by the usual literary standards—in parts so tender and melodious, and again, in other parts, harsh and formless to the verge of doggerel—few sympathetic readers can be unmoved by their passion and directness. They were intended—so he told me—to express what might be the feelings of a member of the working classes, as he found out the hollowness—to him, at any rate—of our modern culture and refinement; and to this purpose must be attributed the author's deliberate neglect of poetical canons. Faulty in technique though some of his verses might be, he knew exactly what he had to say and how he could say it with most effect—as in those trenchant and highly characteristic stanzas "To England."

But the "Songs" are not merely denunciatory; they have a closer, tenderer, and more personal aspect, as in the infinitely compassionate "One among so Many," surely one of the most moving poems in recent literature, which endears them to the heart of the reader as only a few choice books are ever endeared. In this respect Adams's writings are the exact counterpart of his character; for no memory of him dwells more abidingly in the minds of his friends than the occasions when he would eloquently dilate on the people's cause—his beautiful and expressive features, and large flashing eyes, lit up with the glow of a single-hearted enthusiasm.

Francis Adams's literary labours were many-sided, and the list of his published works includes more than twelve volumes of poems, essays, fiction, and criticism, with a drama, "Tiberius," which appeared posthumously in 1894. It was as a critic that he won the most praise in his lifetime—and what it cost him to forsake literature for socialism may be gathered from the concluding poem in this book—but it is through these "Songs of the Army of the Night" that his name is best loved and will be longest remembered.

HENRY S. SALT.

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Author's Preface

A FEW words of preface seem necessary in sending out this little book. It is to be looked on as the product of the life of a social worker in England, on his Travels, and in Australia. The key-note of the First Part—"England"—is desperation, or, if any hope, then "desperate hope." A friend once reported to me a saying of Matthew Arnold's, that he did not believe in any man of intelligence taking a desperate view of the social problem in England. I am afraid that saying relegates me to the ranks of the fools, but I am content to remain there. I believe that never since 1381, which is the date of the Peasants' Revolt, has England presented such a spectacle of the happiness of the tens, of the misery of the millions. It is not by any means the artisan, or the general or the agricultural labourer, who is the only sufferer. All society groans under the slavery of stupendous toil and a pittance wage. The negro slavery of the Southern States of America was better than the white slavery of to-day all over the earth, but more particularly in Europe and in America. The vast edifice of our Civilization is built on the essential wrong of recompensing Labour, not according to the worth of its work, but according to the worth of its members in the market of unlimited competition, and that soon comes to mean the payment of what will hold body and soul together when in the enjoyment of health and strength. Landlordism shares with Capitalism the plunder of Labour. Why are rents high in Australia? Because here Labour is scarcer, its wages correspondingly higher, and therefore Landlordism steps in to filch from Labour its hard-won comforts, and once more reduce it to the necessities of existence. The American slavers had to spend more in housing and keeping any fixed number of their slaves in serviceable condition than Capitalism spends in wages. Capitalism and Landlordism, like good

Christian institutions, leave the living to keep alive their living, and the dead to bury their dead. This cannot continue for ever. At least all the intelligent portion of the community will grow to see the injustice and attempt to abolish it. But when will the great mass of unintelligent people who have won a large enough share of the plunder of their fellows to minister to their own comforts—when will these, also, awake and see? England will realize the desperation of her social problem when its desperation is shown her by fire and blood—then, and not till then! What shall teach her her sins to herself is what is even now teaching her her sins to Ireland.

I make no apology for several poems in the First Part which are fierce, which are even bloodthirsty. As I felt I wrote, and I will not lessen the truth of what inspired those feelings by eliminating or suppressing the record of them. Rather, let me ask you, whoever you be, to imagine what the cause was, from the effect in one who was (unhappily) born and bred into the dominant class, and whose chief care and joy in life was in the pursuit of a culture which draws back instinctively from the violent and the terrible. I will go further. I will arraign my country and my day, because their iniquity would not let me follow out the laws of my nature, which were for luminosity and quiet, for the wide and genial view, but made me “take arms against a sea of troubles,” hoping only too often “by opposing to end them.” No, we make no apology for bloody sweat and for tears of fire wrung out of us in the Gethsemane and on the Calvary of our country; we make no apology to those whom we have the right to curse.

In the Second Part—“Here and There,” the record of a short trip in the East—the sight of the sin which England has committed not only against herself, against Ireland, against Scotland, but against India, against China, against the sweetest and gentlest people in the earth, the Japanese—the sight of this, and of the signs of England's doom, the punishment for the abuse of the greatest trust any modern nation has had given to her, inspires a hatred which only that punishment can appease.

In the Third Part—“Australia”—there is neither ferocity nor bloodthirstiness. Its key-note is hope, hope that dreads but does not despair.

We know well enough that our plea for comprehension will too often be an idle one. None the less we make it, for the sake of those who are willing to attempt to realize the social problem and to seek within themselves what they can do for its solution. We have no care whatever as to what view they take of it. Let them be with us or against us, it matters not, if only they will make this effort, if only they will ponder it in their hearts. Ninety-nine out of a hundred of us are concerned in this problem. We are all of us true sons of Labour who have suffered the robbery of the wages of Competition.

Brothers all over the earth, Brothers and Sisters, you of that silent company whose speech is only in the unknown deeds of love, the unknown devotions, the unknown heroisms, it is to you we speak! Our heart is against your heart; you can feel it beat. Soul speaks to soul through lips whose utterance is a need. In your room alone, in your lonely walks, in the still hours of day and night we will be with you. We will speak with you, we will plead with you, for these piteous ones. In the evening trees you shall hear the sound of our weeping. Our sobs shall shake in the wind of wintry nights. We are the spirit of those piteous ones, the wronged, the oppressed, the robbed, the murdered, and we bid you open your warm heart, your light-lit soul to us! We will thrill you with the clarion of hate and defiance and despair in the tempest of land and sea. You shall listen to us there also. We will touch your eyes and lips with fire. No, we will never let you go, till you are ours and theirs! And you too, O Sufferers, you too shall stay with us, and shall have comfort. Look, we have suffered, we have agonized, we have longed to hasten the hour of rest. But beyond the darkness there is light, beyond the turbulence peace. "Courage and be true to one another." "*We bid you hope.*"

Sydney, Christmas, 1887.

This Book

I give this Book

TO YOU,—

Man or woman, girl or boy, labourer, mechanic, clerk, house-servant, whoever you may be, whose wages are not the worth of your work,—no, nor a fraction of it,—whose wages are the minimum which you and those like you, pressed by the desire for life in the dreadful struggle of “Competition,” will consent to take from your Employers who, thanks to it, are able thus to rob you:—

I give it to you,

in the hope that you may see how you are being robbed,—how Capital that is won by paying you your competition wages is plunder,—how Rent that is won by the increased value of land that is owing to the industry of us all, is plunder,—how the Capitalist and Landowner who over-ride you, how the Master or Mistress who work you from morning till night, who domineer over you as servants and despise you (or what is worse, pity you) as beggars, are the men and women whose sole title to this is, that they have the audacity and skill to plunder you, and you the simplicity and folly not to see it and to submit to it:—

I give this Book to you,

in the hope that you may at last realize this, and in your own fashion never cease the effort to make your fellow-sufferers realize it:

I give it to you,

in the hope that you may formally enrol yourself in the ranks of the Army of the Night, and that you will offer up the best that has been granted you of heart and soul and mind towards the working out of that better time when, in victorious peace, we silence our drums and trumpets, furl our banners, drag our cannons to their place of rest, and solemnly disarming ourselves, become citizens once more, or, if soldiers, then soldiers of the Army of the Day!

Dedication

To His Love

SWEETEST, in desperate hours
Of clouds and lightning and rain,
You came like a vision of flowers
And summer and song once again :
You came, and I could not receive you,
Scared in my flesh, in my sight.
I heedlessly turned back to leave you ;
We passed on into the night.
(*Heart, soul and all, sweet, never to sever,
Love me for ever !*)

Dearest, in hours of twilight,
Terrible, silent and lone,
When the light, long sought for as my light
And found, for ever seemed gone—
When the hope of the love-dream of boyhood
Passed sad with unknowing rebuff,
With your passionate patience and joyhood
You came, O my Priestess of Love !
(*Heart, soul and all, dear, never to sever,
Love me for ever !*)

With your lips to mine deathly-reposing,
You kissed back the blood and the sighs :
You lit up my tired eyes unclosing
With the light of your beautiful eyes.

Dedication

You held me close-pressed to your bosom,
Your heart to my heart, beating strong,
In mine eyes put your life like a blossom,
Put my love in your lips like a song !
(*Heart, soul and all, sweet, never to sever,
Love me for ever !*)

Dearest, of my heart-blood's Evangel
I hail you Queen, and of me :
Sweetest, I revere you Archangel
Of the better time that shall be.
So to these Songs, for my love's sake,
As Priestess of Love must you stand,
And, for the great Truth above's sake,
God's seraph with his sword in your hand !
(*Heart, soul and all, dear, never to sever,
Love me for ever !*)

Songs of the Army of the Night

Proem

IN the black night, along the mud-deep roads,
Amid the threatening boughs and ghastly streams,
Hark! sounds that gird the darknesses like goads,
Murmurs and rumours and reverberant dreams,
Trampling, breaths, movements, and a little light.—
The marching of the Army of the Night!

The stricken men, the mad brute-beasts are keeping
No more their places in the ditches or holes,
But rise, and join us, and the women, weeping
Beside the roadways, rise like demon-souls.
Fill up the ranks! What shimmers there so bright?
The bayonets of the Army of the Night!

Fill up the ranks! We march in steadfast column,
In wavering lines yet forming more and more;
Men, women, children, sombre, silent, solemn,
Rank follows rank like billows to the shore.
Dawnwards we tramp, towards the hills and light.
On, on and up, the Army of the Night!

I. England

Toil

I TOIL, I toil, as toils a jaded horse
Around the ever-changing changeless track
From sunrise on to sunset, till the mill,
That grinds in flour my heart and soul, is still,
And the ropes are loosed, and I may leave my course
And silent, alone with the night, go back
To misery and the cruel sleep whose breasts,
Bitter to suck, give poisoned milk. And this
Is my life! And everything attests
Hell's fleshless hand that holds me pitiless!

Axiom

LET him who toils, enjoy
Fruit of his toiling.
Let him whom sweats annoy,
No more be spoiling.

For we would have it be
That, weak or stronger,
Not he who works, but he
Who works *not*, hunger!

Drill

WHEN day's hard task's done,
Eve's scant meal partaken,
Out we steal each one,
Weariless, unshaken.

In small reeking squares,
Garbaged plots, we gather,
Little knots and pairs,
Brother, sister, father.

Then the Word is given.
In their silent places
Under lowering heaven,
Range our stern-set faces.

Now we march and wheel
In our clumsy line,
Shouldering sticks for steel,
Thoughts bitter as brine !

Drill, drill, drill, and drill !
It is only thus
Conquer yet we will
Those who've conquered us.

Patience, sisters, mothers !
We must not forget
Foiled dead fathers, brothers ;
They must teach us yet.

In that Hour we see,
The Hour of our Desire,
What shall their slayers be ?
As the stubble to the fire !

20 Evening Hymn in the Hovels

Evening Hymn in the Hovels

“WE sow the fertile seed and then we reap it ;
We thresh the golden grain ; we knead the bread.
Others that eat are glad. In store they keep it,
While we hunger outside with hearts like lead.

Hallelujah !

“We hew the stone and saw it, rear the city.
Others inhabit there in pleasant ease.
We have no thing to ask of them save pity,
No answer they to give but what they please.

Hallelujah !

“Is it for ever, fathers, say, and mothers,
That we must toil and never know the light ?
Is it for ever, sisters, say, and brothers,
That they must grind us dead here in the night ?

Hallelujah !

“O we who sow, reap, knead, shall we not also
Have strength and pleasure of the food we make ?
O we who hew, build, deck, shall we not also
The happiness that we have given partake ?

Hallelujah ! ”

In the Street

LORD SHAFTESBURY

YOU have done well, we say it. You are dead,
And, of the man that with the right hand takes
Less than the left hand gives, let it be said
He has done something for our wretched sakes.
For those to whom you gave their daily bread
Rancid with God-loathed “charity,” their drink
Putrid with man-loathed “sin,” we bow our head
Grateful, as the great hearse goes by, and think.
Yes, you have fed the flesh and starved the soul
Of thousands of us ; you have taught too well
The Rich are little gods beyond control,
Save of your big God of the heaven and hell.
We thank you. This was pretty once, and right.
Now it wears rather thin. My lord, good night !

“ Liberty ! ”

“ **L**IBERTY ? ” Is that the cry, then ?
We have heard it oft of yore.
Once it had, we think, a meaning ;
Let us hear it now no more.

We have read what history tells us
Of its heroes, martyrs too.
Doubtless they were very splendid,
But they’re not for me and you.

“ Liberty ! ”

There were Greeks who fought and perished,
Won from Persians deathless graves.
Had *we* lived then, we're aware that
We'd have been those same Greeks' slaves !

Then a Roman came who loved us ;
Cæsar gave men tongues and swords.
Crying “ Liberty,” they fought him,
Cato and his wild-beast lords.

When he'd give a broader franchise,
Lift the mangled nations bowed,
Crying “ Liberty ! ” they killed him,
Brutus and his cut-throat crowd.

We have read what history tells us,
O the truthful memory clings !
Tacitus, the chartered liar,
Gloating over poisoned kings !

“ Liberty ! ” The stale cry echoes
Past smug homesteads, tinsel thrones,
Over smoking fields and hovels,
Murdered peasants' bleaching bones.

That's the cry that mocked us madly,
Toiling in our living graves,
When hell-mines sent up the chorus ;
“ *Britons never shall be slaves !* ”

“ Liberty ! ” We care not for it !
What we care for's food, clothes, homes,
For our dear ones, toiling, waiting
For the time that never comes !

In the Edgware Road

(To LORD —)

WILL you not buy? She asks you, my lord, you
 Who know the points desirable in such.
 She does not say that she is perfect. True,
 She's not too pleasant to the sight or touch.
 But then—neither are you!

Her cheeks are rather fallen in; a mist
 Glazes her eyes, for all their hungry glare.
 Her lips do not breathe balmy when they're kissed.
 And yet she's not more loathsome than, I swear,
 Your grandmother at whist.

My lord, she will admit, and need not frame
 Excuses for herself, that she's not chaste.
 First a young lover had her; then she came
 From one man's to another's arms, with haste.
 Your mother did the same.

Moreover, since she's married, once or twice
 She's sold herself for certain things at night.
 To sell one's body for the highest price
 Of social ease and power, all girls think right.
 Your sister did it thrice.

What, you'll not buy? You'll curse at her instead?—
 Her children are alone, at home, quite near.
 These winter streets, so gay at nights, 'tis said,
 Have 'ticed the wanton out. *She could not hear*
Her children cry for bread!

To the Girls of the Unions

GIRLS, we love you, and love
 Asks you to give again
 That which draws it above,
 Beautiful, without stain.

Give us weariless faith
 In our Cause pure, passionate,
 Dearer than life and death,
 Dear as the love that's it !

Give to the man who turns
 Traitorous hands or forlorn
 Back from the plough that burns,
 Give him pitiless scorn !

Let him know that no wife
 Would bear him a fearless child
 To hate and loathe the life
 Of a leprous father defiled.

*Girls, we love you, and love
 Asks you to give again
 That which draws it above,
 Beautiful, without stain !*

Hagar

SHE went along the road,
 Her baby in her arms,
 The night and its alarms
 Made deadlier her load.

A Visitor in the Camp 25

Her shrunken breasts were dry ;
She felt the hunger bite.
She lay down in the night,
She and the child, to die.

But it would wail, and wail,
And wail. She crept away.
She had no word to say,
Yet still she heard it wail.

She took a jagged stone ;
She wished it to be dead.
She beat it on the head ;
It only gave one moan.

She has no word to say ;
She sits there in the night.
The east sky glints with light,
And it is Christmas Day !

A Visitor in the Camp

TO MARY ROBINSON *

*"WHAT, are you lost, you pretty little lady ?
This is no place for such sweet things as you.
Our bodies, rank with sweat, will make you sicken,
And, you'll observe, our lives are rank lives too."*

* In *The New Arcadia* Miss Robinson devoted to the Cause of Labour a dilettante little book that had not even one note of the true, the sweet and lovely poetry of her deeper impulses. There is the amateur, and the female amateur, no less in perception and emotion than in the technical aspects of our art, and we want no more flimsy "sympathetic" rigmaroles like "The Cry of the Children" or "A Song for the Ragged Schools of London," from those who, in the portraiture of the divine simple woman's soul within them, can give us poetry, genuine and complete.

“Oh no, I am not lost ! Oh no, I’ve come here
 (And I have brought my lute, see, in my hand)
 To see you, and to sing of all you suffer
 To the great World, and make it understand !”

*“Well, say ! If one of those who’d robbed you thousands,
 Dropped you a sixpence in the gutter where
 You lay and rotted, would you call her angel,
 For all her charming smile and dainty air ?”*

“Oh no, I come not thus ! Oh no, I’ve come here
 With heart indignant, pity like a flame,
 To try and help you !”—“*Pretty little lady,
 It will be best you go back whence you came.*

*“‘Enthusiasms’ we have such little time for !
 In our rude camp we drill the whole day long.
 When we return from out the serried Battle,
 Come, and we’ll listen to your pretty song !”*

Lord Leitrim

BRUTE beast, at last you have it ! Now we know
 Truth’s not a phrase, justice an idle show.
 Your life ran red with murder, green with lust.
 Blood has washed blood clean, and in the final dust
 Your carrion will be purified. Yet, see,
 Though your body perish, for your soul shall be
 An immortality of infamy !

Anarchism

'TIS not when I am here,
In these homeless homes,
Where sin and shame and disease
And foul death comes ;

'Tis not when heart and brain
Would be still and forget
Men and women and children
Dragged down to the pit :

But when I hear them declaiming
Of "liberty," "order," and "law,"
The husk-hearted Gentleman
And the mud-hearted Bourgeois,

That a sombre hateful desire
Burns up slow in my breast
To wreck the great guilty Temple,
And give us rest !

Belgravia by Night

"Move on !"

"THE foxes have holes,
And the birds of the air have nests,
But where shall the heads of the sons of men
Be laid, be laid ?"

“Jesus”

*“Where the cold corpse rests,
Where the sightless moles
Burrow and yet cannot make it afraid,
Rout but cannot wake it again,
There shall the heads of the sons of men
Be laid, be laid!”*

“Jesus”

WHERE is poor Jesus gone?
He sits with Dives now,
And his dogs flesh their teeth
On Lazarus below.

Where is poor Jesus gone?
He is with Magdalen.
He doles her piece by piece,
Her pittance of shame!

Where is poor Jesus gone?
The good Samaritan,
What does he there alone?
He stabs the wounded man!

Where is poor Jesus gone,
The lamb they sacrificed?—
They’ve made God of his carrion
And labelled it “Christ!”

Parallels for the Pious

“**H**E holds a pistol to my head,
Swearing he will shoot me dead,
If he have not my purse instead,
The robber !”

*“He, with the lash of wealth and power,
Flogs out my heart and flings the dower,
The sneering pittance of his hour,
The robber !”*

“He shakes his serpent tongue that lies,
Wins trust for poisoned sophistries,
And stabs me in the dark, and flies,
The assassin !”

*“He pits me in the dreadful fight
Against my fellow. Then he quite
Strips both his victims in the night,
The assassin !”*

Prayer

THIS is what I pray
In this horrible day,
In this terrible night—
I may still have light.
Such as I have had,
That I go not mad.

“ Defeat ? ”

This is what I seek—
 I may keep me meek
 Till mine eyes behold,
 Till my lips have told
 All this hellish Crime.—
Then it's sleeping time !

To the “ Christians ”

TAKE, then, your paltry Christ,
 Your gentleman God.
 We want the carpenter's son,
 With his saw and hod.

We want the man who loved
 The poor and the oppressed,
 Who hated the Rich man and King
 And the Scribe and the Priest.

We want the Galilean
 Who knew cross and rod.
 It's your “ good taste ” that prefers
 A bastard “ God ! ”

“ Defeat ? ”

WHO is it speaks of defeat ?—
 I tell you a Cause like ours
 Is greater than defeat can know ;
 It is the power of powers !

To John Ruskin

31

As surely as the earth rolls round,
As surely as the glorious sun
Follows the great world moon-wave,
Must our Cause be won!

What is defeat to us?—
Learn what a skirmish tells,
While the great Army marches on
To storm earth's Hells!

To John Ruskin

(*After reading his "Modern Painters"*)

YES, you do well to mock us, you
Who knew our bitter woe—
To jeer the false, deny the true
In us blind-struggling low,

While, on your pleasant place aloft
With flowers and clouds and streams,
At our black sweat and toil you scoffed
That marred your idle dreams.

"*Oh, freedom, what was that to us,*"
(*You'd shout down to us there*),
"*Except the freedom foul, vicious,*
From all of good and fair?"

"*Obedience, faith, truth, chivalry,*
To us were empty names."—
The like to you (might we reply)
Whose noisy life proclaims

To John Ruskin

Presumption, want of human love,
 Impatience, filthy breath,*
 The snob in soul who looks above,
 Trampling on what's beneath.

When did you strive, in nobler part,
 With love and gentleness,
 To help one soul, to win one heart
 To joy and hope and peace?

Go to, vain Prophet, without faith
 In God who maketh new,
 With hankerings for this putrid death,
 This flesh-feast of the few,

This social structure of red mud,
 This edifice of slime,
 Whose bricks are bones, whose mortar's blood,
 Whose pinnacle is Crime!—

Go to, for we who strain our power
 For light and warmth and scope,
 For wives', for children's happier hour,
 Can teach you faith and hope.

Hark to the shout of those who cleared
 The Missionary Ridge!
 Look on those dead who never feared
 The battle's bloody bridge!

Watch the stern swarm at that last breach
 March up that came not thence—
 And learn Democracy can teach
 Divine obedience.†

* His attack on George Eliot in "Fiction, Fair and Foul," in the *Nineteenth Century*, for instance.

† The attack on Missionary Ridge is an example of the brilliant initiative, as the holding of the Bloody Angle in the Wilderness is of the

To the Emperor William I 33

Pass through that South at last brought low
Where loyal freemen live,
And learn Democracy knows how
To utterly forgive.

Come then, and take this free-given bread
Of us who've scarce enough;
Hush your proud lips, bow down your head
And worship Human Love!

To the Emperor William I

YOU are at least a Man, of men a King.
You have a heart, and with that heart you love.
The race you come from is not gendered of
The filthy sty whose latest litter cling
Round England's flesh-pots, gorged hogs gluttoning.
No, but on flaming battlefields, in courts
Of honour and of danger old resorts,
The name of Hohen-Zollern clear doth ring.
O Father William, you, not falsely weak,
Who never spared the rod to spoil the child,
Our mighty Germany, we only speak,
To bless you with a blessing sweet and mild,
Ere that near heaven your weary footsteps seek
Where love with liberty is reconciled.

dauntless resolution, of the army of the Democracy of the United States, while the last attacks on Richmond were the final exploit of the conqueror of two combatants, of whom it is enough to say that they were worthy of one another.

Song of the Dispossessed

"TO JESUS"

"**B**E with us by day, by night,
 O lover, O friend ;
 Hold before us thy light
 Unto the end !

"See, all these children of ours
 Starved and ill-clad.
 Speak to thy heart's lily-flowers,
 And make them glad !

"Our wives and daughters are here,
 Knowing wrong and shame's touch ;
 Bid them be of good cheer
 Who have lovèd much.

"And we, we are robbed and oppressed,
 Even as thine were.
 Tell us of comfort and rest,
 Banish despair !"

*"Be with us by day, by night,
 O lover, O friend ;
 Hold before us thy light
 Unto the end !"*

Art

YES, let Art go, if it must be
 That with it men must starve—
 If Music, Painting, Poetry
 Spring from the wasted hearth.

Pluck out the flower, however fair,
 Whose beauty cannot bloom
 (However sweet it be, or rare)
 Save from a noisome tomb.

These social manners, charm and ease
 Are hideous to who knows
 The degradation, the disease
 From which their beauty flows.

So, Poet, must thy singing be ;
 O Painter, so thy scene ;
 Musician, so thy melody,
 While misery is queen.

*Nay, brothers, sing us battle-songs
 With clear and ringing rhyme ;
 Nay, show the world its hateful wrongs,
 And bring the better time !*

The Peasants' Revolt*

THRO' the mists of years,
 Thro' the lies of men,
 Your bloody sweat and tears,
 Your desperate hopes and fears
 Reach us once again,

* Something like an adequate account of this great *révolution manquée* which in England and 1381 went near to anticipating France and 1793 has at last found its place in the historians' pages, and Longland the poet, Ball the preacher, and Tyler the man of action, who first raised for us the democratic demand, can be seen somewhat as they were. This, and more, we owe to John Richard Green. An account of the Revolt will be found in section 4 of chapter 5 of his "Short History of the English People." The phrases in verses 3 and 5 were catchwords among the revoltors.

The Peasants' Revolt

Brothers, who long ago,
For life's bitter sake,
Toiled and suffered so,
Robbery, insult, blow,
Rope and sword and stake :

Toiled and suffered, till
It burst, the brightening hope,
"Might and right" and "will and skill,"
That scorned, and does, and will,
Sword and stake and rope !

Wat and Jack and John,
Tyler, Straw, and Ball,
Souls that faltered not,
Hearts like white iron hot,
Still we hear your call !

Yes, your "bell is rung,"
Yes, for "now is time !"
Come hither, every one,
Brave ghosts whose day's not done,
Avengers of old Crime,

Come and lead the way,
Hushed, implacable,
Suffering no delay,
Forgetting not that day
Dreadful, hateful, fell.

When the liar King,
The liar Gentlemen,
Wrought that foulest thing,
Robbing, murdering,
Men who trusted them ! *

* After dismissing the peasants with the formally written acknowledgment of their freedom and rights, Richard II, with an army of 40,000 followers, avenged himself and his lords by ruthless and prolonged massacres over the whole country.

Come and lead the way,
 Hushed, implacable.
 What shall stop us, say,
 On that day, *our* day?—
Not unloosened hell!

Analogy

(To ——)

HAD you lived when a tyrant King
 Stroved to make all the slaves of one,
 With Nobles and with Churchmen you
 Had stood unflinching, pure and true,
 To annihilate that hateful thing
 Green Runnymede beat out of John?

Had you lived when a wanton crew,
 Flash scoundrels of a day outdone,
 Trod down the toilers birth derides,
 With Cromwell and his Ironsides
 The brave days had discovered you,
 Where Naseby saw the Gallants run?

And yet you,—this same knight in list
 For Freedom in her narrow dawn
 Against that One, against those Few,
 Vile King, vile Nobles—you, yet you
 Stand by the bloody Capitalist,
 Fight with the pander Gentleman!

In Trafalgar Square

THE stars shone faint through the smoky blue ;
 The church-bells were ringing ;
 Three girls, arms laced, were passing through,
 Tramping and singing.

Their heads were bare : their short skirts swung
 As they went along ;
 Their scarf-covered breasts heaved up, as they sung
 Their defiant Song.

It was not too clean, their feminine lay,
 But it thrilled me quite
 With its challenge to taskmaster villainous day
 And infamous night,

With its threat to the robber Rich, the Proud,
 The respectable Free.
 And I laughed and shouted to them aloud,
 And they shouted to me !

*" Girls, that's the shout, the shout we shall utter
 When, with rifles and spades,
 We stand, with the old Red Flag aflutter,
 On the barricades ! "*

A Street Fight

(To ——*)

SIR, we approve your curling lip and nose
 At this vile sight.

These men, these women are " brute beasts " ?—Who knows,
 Sir, but that you are right ?

* Who owns, and rack-rents, some of the vilest slums in London, and is beautifully æsthetic in private life.

Panders and harlots, rogues and thieves and worse,
We are a crew
Whose pitiful plunder's honoured in the purse
Of gentlemen (like you),

Whom holy Competition's taught (like us)

"What's thine is mine!"—

*How we must love you who have made us thus,
You may perhaps divine!*

Greek Lyrics

[On reading some Greek Lyrics after several toilsome months during which he had not opened a Greek book]

O WORDS as clear as are the dawn sky-rifts
Between the still cloud-layers, and eke as sweet
As violets are, looking through crystal dew,
And with such melody as birds may have
That sing the morning notes where peace and joy
Are mingled all, and every thought is still—
O Words, ye come to me, a toiler here
With life-blood hurrying thro' imperilled veins,
Ye come as from a heaven, a heaven on earth,
Wherein (I know not when) ye were mine too!
Ah me, clear Words, sweet Words melodious,
Too long an unknown tongue are ye to me,
A tongue unknown too long for peace and joy.
No heaven on earth, but ever earth on heaven
I pile and dwindle piling. Pass away;
For I can linger not, nor ease my toil—
Away, and leave me with the dreadful night
And all the sadness of the voiceless stars!

In an East End Hovel

To a Workman, a would-be Suicide

MAN of despair and death,
 Bought and slaved in the gangs,
 Starved and stripped and left
 To the pitiful, pitiless night,
 Away with your selfish thoughts !
 Touch not your ignorant life !
 Are there no masters of slaves,
 Jeering, cynical, strong—
 Are there no brigands (say),
 With the words of Christ on their lips,
 And the daggers under their cloaks—
 Is there not one of these
 That you can steal on and kill ?
 O as the Swiss mountaineer
 Dogged on the perilous heights
 His disciplined conqueror foes : *
 Caught up one in his arms
 And, laughing exultantly,
 Plunged with him to the abyss :
 So let it be with you !
 An eye for an eye, and a tooth
 For a tooth, and a life for a life !
 Tell it, this hateful strong
 Contemptuous, hypocrite World,
 Tell it that, if we must live
 As dogs and as worse than dogs,
 At least we can die like men !
 Tell it there is a woe
 Not for the conquered alone ! †
*An eye for an eye, and a tooth
 For a tooth, and a life for a life.*

* The French.

† “*Væ victis* !” woe to the conquered—the motto of the Gauls in Rome
as of the modern Civilization of Land and Capital.

Dublin at Dawn

IN the chill grey summer dawn-light
 We pass through the empty streets ;
 The rattling wheels are all silent ;
 No friend his fellow greets.

Here and there, at the corners,
 A man in a great-coat stands ;
 A bayonet hangs by his side, and
 A rifle is in his hands.

This is a conquered city ;
 It speaks of war not peace ;
 And that's one of the English soldiers
 The English call "police."

You see, at the present moment
 That noble country of mine
 Is boiling with indignation
 At the memory of a "crime."

In a path of the Phoenix Park where
 The children romped and ran,
 An Irish Ruffian met his doom,
 And an English Gentleman.

For a hundred and over a hundred
 Years on the country side
 Men and women and children
 Have slaved and starved and died,

That those who slaved and starved them
 Might spend their earnings then,
 And the Irish Ruffians have a "good time,"
 And the English Gentlemen.

The Caged Eagle

For a hundred and over a hundred
Years, that Christian land
Has read its Bible and looked at all this,
And lifted nor foot nor hand.

But still at the present moment
This noble country of mine
Is boiling with indignation
At the memory of this "crime."

For the Irish Ruffians (they tell me,
And it looks as if 'twere true)
And the English Gentlemen are so scarce,
We must wildly avenge these two.

In the chill grey summer dawn-light
We pass through the empty streets ;
The rattling wheels are all silent ;
No friend his fellow greets.

Here and there at the corners,
A man in a great-coat stands ;
A bayonet hangs by his side, and
A rifle is in his hands.

This is a conquered city ;
It speaks of war not peace ;
And that's one of the English soldiers
The English call "police."

The Caged Eagle

. . . I went the other day
To see the birds and beasts they keep enmewed
In the London Zoo. One of the first I saw—
One of the first I noticed, was an Eagle,

Ragged, befouled, within his iron bars
He sat without a movement or a sound,
And, when I stood and pitying looked at him,
I saw his great sad eyes that winkless gazed
Out to the horizon sky. I passed from there,
And walked about the gardens hither and thither,
Till all the afternoon was spent. Returning then
To seek my home, again by chance I passed
The Eagle's cage, and stood again and looked,
And saw his great sad eyes that winkless gazed
Out to the horizon sky. So I went home. . . .
The Eagle is Ireland.

Ireland

O WE have loved you through cold and rain
And pitiless frost,
Consuming our offering of blood and brain
Gladly again and again and again,
Though it all seemed lost,
Ireland, Ireland !

O we will fight, fight on for you till
Your anguish is past,
The wronged ones righted, the tyrants still.—
Though God has not saved you, yet we will,
At the last, at the last,
Ireland, Ireland !

O we will love you in warmth and light
And the happy day,
When you have forgotten the terrible night,
Standing proud and beautiful bright
For ever and aye,
Ireland, Ireland !

To Charles Parnell

ONE thing we praise you for that is past praise—
The dauntless eyes that faced the rain and night,
The hand that never wearied in the fight,
Till, through the dark's despair, the dawn's delays,
It rose, that vision of forgotten days,
Ireland, a Nation in her right and might,
As fearless of the lightning as the Light,—
Freedom, the noon-tide sun that shines and stays!
O brave, O pure, O hater of the wrong,
(The wrong that is as one with England's name,
Tyranny with cant of liberty, and shame
With boast of righteousness), to you belong
Trust for the hate that blinds our foes like flame,
Love for the hope that makes our hearts so strong!

An "Assassin"

. . . They caught him at the bend. He and his son
Sat in the car, revolvers in their laps.
From either side the stone-walled wintry road
There flashed thin fire-streaks in the rainy dusk.
The father swayed and fell, shot through the chest.
The son was up, but one more fire-streak leaped
Close from the pitch-black of a thick-set bush
Not five yards further and lit all the face
Of him whose sweetheart walked the Dublin streets
For lust of him who gave one yell and fell
Flat on the stony road a sweltering corse.

Then they came out, the men who did this thing,
And looked upon their hatred's retribution,
While heedlessly the rattling car fled on.
Grey-haired old Wolf, your letch for peasants' blood,
For peasants' sweat turned gold and silver and bronze,
Is done for ever, for ever and ever is done !
O foul young Fox, no more young girls' fresh lips
Shall bruise and bleed to cool your lecher's lust.
Slowly from out the great high-terraced clouds
The round moon sailed. The dead were left alone.

I talked with one of those who did this thing,
A coughing half-starved lad, mere skin and bone.
I said : “ They found upon those dead men gold.
Why did you not take it ? ” Then with proud-raised head,
He looked at me and said : “ *Sorr, we're not thaves !* ”

*Brother, from up the maimed and mangled earth,
Strewn with our flesh and bones, wet with our blood,
Let that great Word go up to unjust heaven
And smite the cheek of the Devil they've called “ God ! ”*

“ Holy Russia ”

CROUCHED in the terrible land,
The circle of pitiless ice,
With frozen bloody feet
And her pestilential summer's
Fever-throb in her brow,
Look, in her deep slow eyes
The mists of her sleep of faith
Stir, and a gleam of light,
The ray of a blood-red sun,
Beams out into the dusk.

“ Holy Russia ”

From far away, from the west,
From the east, from the south, there come
Faint sweet breaths of the breeze
Of plenteous warmth and light.
And she moves, and around her neck
She feels the iron-scaled Snake
Whose fangs suck at the heart
Hid by her tattered dress,
By her lean and hanging teat.
Russia, O land of Faith,
O realm of the ageless Slav,
O oppressed one of eternity,
This darkest hour is the hour,
The hour of the coming dawn !
Europe, the rank, the corrupt,
Lies stretched out at your feet.
Turkey, India, lo all,
East and south, it is yours !

Years, years ago a Nation,*
Oppressed as you are oppressed,
Burst her bonds and leaped out,
A volcanic sea-wave of fire,
Quenched at last but in blood,
Though not before the red spray
Dashed the Pyramids, the Escorial,
Rome, and your own grey Kremlin.
That was the great sea-wave
Of a nation that disbelieved,
Of a nation that had not faith !
*What shall the sea-wave be,
Of this race of eternal belief,
This nation of passionate faith ?*

* France.

Père-la-Chaise *

(PARIS)

I STOOD in Père-la-Chaise. The putrid City,
Paris, the harlot of the nations, lay,
The bug-bright thing that knows not love nor pity,
Flashing her bare shame to the summer's day.

Here where I stand, they slew you, brothers, whom
Hell's wrongs unutterable had made as mad.
The rifle shots re-echoed in his tomb,
The gilded scoundrel's who had been so glad.

O Morny, O blood-sucker of thy race—
O brain, O hand that wrought out empire that
The lust in one for power, for tinsel place,
Might rest ; one lecher's hungry heart grow fat—

Is it for nothing, now and evermore,
O you whose sin in life had death in ease,
The murder of your victims beats the door
Wherein your careless carrion lies at peace ?

Aux Ternes †

(PARIS)

SHE.—“ *Up and down, up and down,
From early eve to early day.
Life is quicker in the town ;
When you've leisure, anyway !*

* In Père-la-Chaise, the famous Parisian cemetery, the Communists made a desperate stand, but were overcome and the captured ones shot. And Morny's vaulted tomb was close at hand, and Balzac smiled his animal cynicism from his bust. Victims, Murderer, and commenting Chorus, all were there.

† A part of Paris.

*“Down and up, down and up!
O will no one stop and speak?
I am fain to eat and sup,
All my limbs are heavy and weak.*

*“What’s my price, sirs? I’m no Jew.
If with me you wish to sleep,
'Tis five francs, sirs. Surely you
Will admit that that is cheap?”*

HE.—“Christ, if you are not stone blind,
Stone deaf also, you know it is
Christian towns leave far behind
Sodom and those other cities.

*“Bid your Father strike this town,
Wipe it utterly away!
Weary, hungry, up and down
From early eve to early day?*

*“Magdalen knew nought like this;
She had food and roof above;
Seven devils, too, did she possess;
This poor soul had but one—love!*

THE OTHER.—“*No, Christ is not deaf nor blind;
He’s but dust in Syrian ground,
And his Father has declined
To a parson’s phrase, a sound.*

*“Not by such, then, but by us
These hell-wrongs must be redressed
Take this morsel venomous:
Nourish it within your breast.*

*“You must live on, live and hate;
Conquer wrath, despair and pain;
For ‘we bid you hope’ and wait
Till the Red Flag flies again:*

*"Till once more the People rise,
Once more, once and only once,
Blood-red hands and blazing eyes
Of the robbed and murdered ones !"*

The Truth

COME then, let us at least know what's the truth.
Let us not blink our eyes and say
We did not understand ; old age or youth
Benumbed our sense or stole our sight away.

It is a lie—just that, a lie—to declare
That Wages are the worth of Work.
No ; they are what the Employer wills to spare
To let the Employee sheer starvation shirk.

They're the life-pittance Competition leaves,
The least for which brother'll slay brother.
He who the fruits of this hell-strife receives,
He is a thief, an assassin, and none other.

It is a lie—just that, a lie—to declare
That Rent's the interest on just gains.
Rent's the thumb-screw that makes the worker share
With him who worked not the produce of his pains.

Rent's the wise tax the human tape-worm knows.
The fat he takes ; the life-lean leaves.
The holy Landlord is, as we suppose,
Just this—the model of assassin-thieves !

What is the trick the Rich-man, then, contrives ?
How play my lords their brilliant rôles ?—
*They live on the plunder of our toiling lives,
The degradation of our bodies and souls !*

London

CRUEL City, London, London,
 Where, duped slaves of devils' creeds,
 Men and women desperate, undone,
 Dream such dreams, and do such deeds :

London, London, cruel city,
 By day serpent, by night vampire—
 God, in thy great pity, pity,
 Give us light—though it be fire !

Post-Mortem

BURY me with clenched hands
 And eyes open wide,
 For in storm and struggle I lived,
 And in struggle and storm I died.

To the Sons of Labour

GRAVE this deep in your hearts,
 Forget not the tale of the past !
 Never, never believe
 That any will help you, or can,
 Saving only Yourselves !
 What have the Gentlemen done,
 Peerless haters of wrong,
 Byrons and Shelleys, what ?
 They stand great famous Names,
 Demi-gods to their own,
 Shadows far off, alien
 To us and ours for ever.

To the Sons of Labour 51

Those who love them and hate
The crime, the injustice they hated,
What can they do but shout,
Win a name from our woes,
And leave us just as we were ?
No, but resolutely turned,
Our wants, our desires made clear,
And clear the means that shall win them,
Drill and drill and drill !
Then when the day is come,
When the royal battleflag's up,
When blood has been spilled in vain
In timid half-hearted war,
Then let the Cromwell rise,
The simple, the true-souled Man ;
Then let Grant come forth,
The calm, the determined Comrade,
But deep in their hearts one hate,
Deep in their souls one thought,
To bring the Iniquity low,
To make the People free !
Ah, for such as these,
We with the same heart-hate,
We with the same soul-thought,
Will fall to our destined places
In the ranks of the Great New Model,*
In the Army that sees ahead
Marston, Naseby, Whitehall,
The Wilderness, Petersburg—yes,
But beyond the blood and the smoke,
Beyond the struggle and death,
The Union victorious safe,
The Commonwealth glorious free !

* The New Model is the name by which is known that reorganization of the Roundhead Army, without which Cromwell saw that the Cavaliers could not be conquered. No one was permitted in its ranks who did not thoroughly believe in the Cause for which it fought.

To an Artist

YOU tell me these great lords have raised up Art?
I say they have degraded it. Look you,
When ever did they let the Poet sing,
The Painter paint, the Sculptor hew and cast,
The Music raise her heavenly voice, except
To praise them and their wretched rule o'er men?
Behold our English poets that were poor
Since these great lords were rich and held the state:
Behold the glories of the German land,
Poets, Musicians, driven, like them, to death
Unless they'd tune their spirits' harps to play
Drawing-room pieces for the chattering fools
Who aped the taste for Art or for a leer.
I say, no Art was ever noble yet,
Noble and high, the speech of godlike men,
When fetters bound it, be they gold or flowers.
All that is noblest, highest, greatest, best,
Comes from the Galilean peasant's hut, comes from
The Stratford village, the Ayrshire plough, the shop
That gave us Chaucer, the humble Milton's trade—
Bach's, Mozart's, great Beethoven's—and these are they
Who knew the People, being what they knew!
Wherefore, if in the future years no strain,
No picture of earth's glory like to what
Your Artists raised for that small clique or this
Of supercilious imbecilities—
O if no better demi-gods of Art
Can rise save those whose barbarous tinsel yet
Makes hideous all the beauty of old homes—
Then let us seek the comforts of despair
In democratic efforts dead and gone;
Weep with Pheideian Athens, sigh an hour
With Raffaele's Florence, beat the head and breast
O'er Shakspeare's England that from Milton's took
In lips the name that leaped from lead and flame
From out her heart against the Spanish guns!

One among so Many

. . . In a dark street she met and spoke to me,
Importuning, one wet and mild March night.
We walked and talked together. O her tale
Was very common ; thousands know it all !
"Seduced" ; a gentleman ; a baby coming ;
Parents that railed ; London ; the child born dead ;
A seamstress then, one of some fifty girls
"Taken on" a few months at a dressmaker's
In the crush of the "season" at ten shillings a week !
The fashionable people's dresses done,
And they flown off, these fifty extra girls
Sent—to the streets : that is, to work that gives
Scarcely enough to buy the decent clothes
Respectable employers all demand
Or speak dismissal. Well, well, well, we know !
And she—"Why, I have gone on down and down,
And there's the gutter, look, that I shall die in !"
"My dear," I say, "where hope of all but that
Is gone, 'tis time, I think, life were gone too."
She looks at me. "*That I should kill myself?*"
"That you should kill yourself."—"That would be sin,
And God would punish me !"—"And will not God
Punish for this ?" She pauses ; then whispers :
"No, no, He will forgive me, for He knows !"
I laughed aloud : "*And you,*" she said, "*and you,*
Who are so good, so noble" . . . "Noble ? Good ?"
I laughed aloud, the great sob in my throat.
O my poor Darling, O my little lost Sheep
Of this vast flock that perishes alone
Out in the pitiless desert !—Yet she'd speak :
She'd ask me : she'd entreat : she'd demonstrate.
O I must not say that ! I must believe !
Who made the sea, the leaves so green, the sky
So big and blue and pure above it all ?

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O my poor Darling, O my little lost Sheep,
Entreat no more and demonstrate no more ;
For I believe there *is* a God, a God
Not in the heaven, the earth, or the waters ; no,
But in the heart of Man, on the dear lips
Of angel Women, of heroic Men !
O hopeless Wanderer that would not stay,
(*" It is too late, I cannot rise again ! "*)
O Saint of faith in love behind the veils,
(*" You must believe in God, for you are good ! "*)
O Sister who made holy with your kiss,
Your kiss in that wet dark mild night of March,
There in the hideous infamous London streets,
My cheek, and made my soul a sacred place,
O my poor Darling, O my little lost Sheep !

The New Locksley Hall

"Forty Years After"

COMRADE, yet a little further I would go before the night
Closes round and chills in darkness all the glorious sunset
light—

Yet a little, by the cliff there, till the stately home I see
Of the man who once was with us, comrade once with you and me !
Nay, but leave me, pass alone there ; stay awhile and gaze again
On the various-jewelled waters and the dreamy southern main,
For the evening breeze is sighing in the quiet of the hills,
Moving down in cliff and terrace to the singing sweet sea-rills,
While the river, silent-stealing, thro' the copse and thro' the lea
Winds her waveless way eternal to the welcome of the sea.

Yes, within that green-clad homestead, gardened grounds and
velvet ease
Of a home where culture reigneth and the chambers whisper
peace,

The New Locksley Hall 55

Is the Man, the Seer and Singer, who (ah, years and years
away !)

Lifted up a face of gladness at the breaking of the day.

For the noontide's desperate ardours that had seen the Roman
town

Wrap the boy Keats, "by the hungry generations trodden
down,"

In his death-shroud with the ashes of the fairy Child of Storm,
Fluttering skylark in the breakers, caught and smothered by the
foam,

And had closed those eyes heroic, weary for the final peace,
Byron maimed and maddened, strangled in the anguish that was
Greece—

For this noontide passed to darkness, brooding doubt and wild
dismay,

Where the silly sparrows chirruped and the eagles swooped
away,

Till once more the trampled Peoples and the murdered soul of
Man

Raised a haggard face half-wondering where the new-born Day
began,

Where the sign of Faith's renewal, Faith's and Hope's, and
Love's, outgrew

In the golden sun arising ; and we hailed it, we and you !

O you hailed it, and your heart beat, and your pretty woman's
lays,

In the fathomless vibration of our rapturous amaze,

Died for ever on your harpstrings, and you rose and struck a
chord

High, full, clear, heroic, godlike, "for the glory of the Lord !"

Noble words you spoke ; we listened ; and we dreamed the
day had come

When the faith of God and Christ should sound one cry with
Man's freedom—

When the men who stood beside us, eager with hell's troops to
cope,

Radiant, thrilled exultant, proud, with the magnificence of
hope !

56 The New Locksley Hall

"Forward! forward!" ran our watchword. "Forward! forward!" by our side

You gave back the glorious summons. Would that day that you had died!

Better lying fallen, death-struck, breathless, bleeding, on your face,

With your bright sword pointing onward, dying happy in your place!

Better to have passed in spirit from the battle-storm's eclipse
With the great Cause in your heart and with the war-shout on your lips!

Better to have fallen charging, having known the nobler time,
In the fiery cheer and impulse of our serried battle-line—

Than to stand and watch your comrades, in the hail of fire and lead,

Up the slopes and thro' the smoke-clouds, thro' the dying and the dead,

Till the sun strikes through a moment, to our one victorious shout,

On our bayonets bristling brightly as we carry the redoubt!

O half-hearted, pusillanimous, faltering heart and fuddled brain
That remembered Egypt's flesh-pots, and turned back and dreamed again—

Left the plain of blood and battle for the quiet of the hills,
And the sunny soft contentment that the woody homestead fills.

There you sat and sang of Egypt, of its sober solid graves,
(Pyramids, you call them, Sphinxes), mortared with the blood of slaves,

Houses, streets and stately palaces, the mart, the regal stew
Where freedom "broadens down" so slow it stops with lords and you!

O you mocked at our confusion, O you told us of our crimes,
Us ungentle, not like warriors of the sweet idyllic times,
Flowers of eunuch-hearted kings and courts where pretty poet knights

Tilted gaily, or slew stake-armed peasants, hundreds, in the fights?

The New Locksley Hall 57

O you drew the hideous picture of our bravest and our best,
Patient martyrs, desperate swordsmen, for the Cause that gives
not rest—

Men of science, “vivisectors!” democrats, the “rout of beasts”—
Writers, essayists and poets, “Belial’s prophets, Moloch’s
priests!”

Coward, you have made the great refusal! you have won the
gilded praise

Of the wringers of his heart’s-blood from the peasant’s sunless
days,

Of the Lord and the Land-owner, of the Rich-man who has
bound

Labour on the wheel to break him, strew his rent limbs on the
ground,

With a vulture eye aglare on brothers, sisters that he had,
Crying “Troops and guns to shoot them, if the hunger drive
them mad!”

Coward, faithless, unbelieving, that had courage but to take
What of pleasure and of beauty men have won for manhood’s
sake,

Blustering long and loudest at the hideousness and pain
These you praise have brought upon us ; blustering long and loud
again

At our agony and anguish in this desperate fight of ours,
Grappling with anarch custom and the darkness and the
powers !

O begone, then, from among us ! Echo not, however faint,
Our great watch-word, our great war-shout, sweet and sickly
poet saint !

Sit there dreaming in your gardens, looking out upon the sea,
Till the night-time closes round you and the wind is on the
lea.

Enter then within your chambers in the rich and quiet light :
Never think of us who struggle in the tempest and the night.
Soothe your fancy with your visions ; bend a gracious senile
ear

To the praise your guests are murmuring in the tone you love to
hear.

58 The New Locksley Hall

Honoured of your Queen, and honoured of the gentlest and the
best,

Lord and commoner and rich-man, smirking tenant, shopman,
priest,

All distinguished and respectable, the seamy sons of light,
O what, O what are these who call you coward in the night?

Ay, what are we who struggled for the cause of Science, say,
Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Haeckel, marshalling our stern array?
We who raised the cry for Culture, Goethe's spirit leading on,
Marching gladly with our captains, Renan, Arnold, Emerson?

We, we are not tinkers, tinkers of the kettle cracked and broke,
Tailors squatted cross-legged, patching at the greasy, worn-out
cloak!

We are those that faced mad Fortune, cried: "The Truth and
only she!

Onward, upward! If we perish, we at least will perish free!"

We have lost our souls to win them, in the house and in the
street

Falling stabbed and poisoned, making a victory of defeat.

We have lost life's happy present, we have paid death's heavy
debt,

We have won, have won the Future, and its sons shall not
forget!

Enter, then, within your chamber in the rich and quiet light:

Never think of us who struggle in the tempest and the night;

Spread your nostrils to the incense, hearken to the murmured
hymn

Of the praising people, rising from the temple fair and dim.

Ah, but we here in the tempest, we here struggling in the
night,

See the worshippers out-stealing; see the temple emptying
quite;

See the godhead turning ghostlike; see the pride of name and
fame

Paling slowly, sad and sickly, with forgetfulness and shame! . . .

Darker, darker grows the night now, louder, louder howls the
wind;

I can hear the dash of breakers and the deep sea moves behind,

Farewell to the Market 59

I can see the foam-capped phalanx rushing on the crumbling shore,
Slowly but surely shattering its rampart evermore.
Hark! my comrade's voice is calling, and his solitary cry
On the great dark swift air-currents like Fate's summons sweepeth by.

Farewell, then, whom once I loved so, whom a boy I thrilled to hear

Urging courage and reliance, loathing acquiescent fear.
I must leave you; I must wander to a strange and distant land,
Facing all that Fate shall give me with her hard unequal hand—
I once more anew must face them, toil and trouble and disease,
But these a man may face and conquer, for there waits him death and peace

And the freedom from dishonour and denial e'er confessed
Of what he knows is truest, what most beautiful and best!
O farewell, then! I must leave you. You have chosen. You are right.

You have made the great refusal; you have shunned the wind and night,
You have won your soul, and won it—No, not lost it as they tell—

Happy, blest of gods and monarchs, O a long, a long farewell!

Freshwater, Isle of Wight.

Farewell to the Market

“Susannah and Mary-Jane”

TWO little Darlings alone,
Clinging hand in hand;
Two little Girls come out
To see the wonderful land!

Farewell to the Market

Here round the flaring stalls

They stand wide-eyed in the throng,
While the great, the eloquent Huckster
Perorates loud and long.

They watch those thrice-blessed mortals,
The dirty guzzling Boys,
Who partake of dates, periwinkles,
Ices and other joys.

And their little mouths go wide open
At some of the brilliant sights
That little Darlings may see in the road
Of Edgware on Saturday nights.

The eldest's name is Susannah ;
She was four years old last May.
And Mary-Jane, the youngest,
Is just three years old to-day.

And I know all about their cat, and
Their father and mother too,
And "Pigshead," their only brother,
Who got his head jammed in the flue.

And *they* know several particulars
Of a similar sort of me,
For we went up and down together
For over an hour, we three.

And Susannah walked beside me,
As became the wiser and older,
Fast to one finger, but Mary-Jane
Sat solemnly up on my shoulder.

And we bought some sweets, and a monkey
That climbed up a stick "quite nice."
And then last we adjourned for refreshments,
And the ladies had each an ice.

Farewell to the Market 61

And Susannah's ice was a pink one,
And she sucked it up so quick,
But Mary-Jane silently proffered
Her ice to me for a lick.

And then we went home to Mother,
And we found her upon the floor,
And Father was trying to balance
His shoulders against the door.

And Susannah said "O" and "Please, sir,
We'll go in ourselves, sir!" And
We kissed one another and parted,
And they stole in hand in hand.

And its O for my two little Darlings
I never shall see again,
Though I stand for the whole night watching
And crying here in the rain!

II. Here and There

England in Egypt

FROM the dusty jaded sunlight of the careless Cairo streets,
Through the open bedroom window where the pale blue
held the palms,
There came a sound of music, thrilling cries and rattling beats,
That startled me from slumber with a shock of sweet alarms.
For beneath this rainless heaven with this music in my ears
I was born, and all my boyhood with its joy was glorified,
And for me the ranging Red-coats hold a passion of bright
tears,
And the glancing of the bayonets lights a hell of savage pride.

So I leaped and ran, and looked,
And I stood, and listened there,
Till I heard the fifes and drums,
Till I heard the fifes and drums,
The fifes and drums of England
Thrilling all the alien air!—
And “England, England, England,”
I heard the wild fifes cry,
“We are here to rob for England,
And to throttle liberty!”
And “England, England, England,”
I heard the fierce drums roar,
“We are tools for pious swindlers
And brute bullies evermore!”

And the silent Arabs crowded, half-defiant, half-dismayed.

And the jaunty fifers fifeing flung their challenge to the breeze,
And the drummers kneed their drums up as the reckless
drumsticks played,

And the Tommies all came trooping, tripping, slouching at
their ease.

Ah Christ, the love I bore them for their brave hearts and strong
hands—

Ah! Christ, the hate that smote me for their stupid dull
conceits—

I know not which was greater, as I watched their conquering
bands

In the dusty jaded sunlight of the sullen Cairo streets.

And my dream of love and hate

Surged, and broke, and gathered there,

As I heard the fifes and drums,

As I heard the fifes and drums,

The fifes and drums of England

Thrilling all the alien air!—

And “Tommy, Tommy, Tommy,”

I heard the wild fifes cry,

“Will you never know the England

For which men, not fools, should die?”

And “Tommy, Tommy, Tommy,”

I heard the fierce drums roar,

“Will you always be a cut-throat

And a slave for evermore?”

No, I shall never see it with these weary death-dim eyes,

The hour of Retribution, the hour of Fate's desire,

When before the outraged millions, as at last—at last they rise,

The rogues and thieves of England are as stubble to the fire!

When the gentlemen of England, eaten out with lust and sin,

When the shop-keepers of England, sick with godly greed
as well,

Face the Red-coats and the Red-shirts, as the steel-ring closes in

And hurls them, howling madly, down the precipice of hell!

In the Pit

But O, I *knew*, that hour,
 Standing sick and dying there,
 As I heard the fifes and drums,
 As I heard the fifes and drums,
 The fifes and drums of England
 Thrilling all the alien air !
 And "Tommy, Tommy, Tommy,"
 I heard the wild fifes cry,
 "It is time to cease your fooling ;
 It is time to do or die !"
 And "Johnnie, Johnnie, Johnnie,"
 I heard the fierce drums roar,
 "It is time to break your fetters
 And be free for evermore !"

In the Pit

"Chant of the Firemen"

"THIS is the steamer's pit.
 The ovens like dragons of fire
 Glare thro' their close-lidded eyes
 With restless hungry desire.
 "Down from the tropic night
 Rushes the funnelled air ;
 Our heads expand and fall in ;
 Our hearts thump huge as despair.
 "'Tis we make the bright hot blood
 Of this throbbing inanimate thing ;
 And our life is no less the fuel
 Than the coal we shovel and fling.
 "And lest of this we be proud
 Or anything but meek,
 We are well cursed and paid—
 Ten shillings a week !"

*Round, round, round in its tunnel
The Shaft turns pitiless strong,
While lost souls cry out in the darkness :
“How long, O Lord, how long?”*

A Mahomedan Ship Fireman

UP from the oven pit,
The hell where poor men toil,
At the sunset hour he comes
Clean-clothed, washed from soil.

On the fo’c’s’le head he kneels,
His face to the hallowed West.
He prays, and bows and prays.
Does he pray for death and rest?

To India

O INDIA, India, O my lovely land—
At whose sweet throat the greedy English Snake,
With fangs and lips that suck and never slake,
Clings, while around thee, band by stifling band,
The loathsome Shape twists, chaining foot and hand—
O from this death-swoon must thou never wake,
From limbs enfranchised these foul fetters to shake,
And, proud among the nations, to rise and stand?
Nay, but thine eyes, thine eyes, wherein there stays
The patience of that august Faith that scorns
The tinsel creed of Christ, dream still and gaze,
Where, not within the timeless east and haze,
The haunt of that wan moon with fading horns,
There breaks the first of Himalayan morns!

To England

I

THERE was a time when all thy sons were proud
 To speak thy name,
 England, when Europe echoed back aloud
 Thy fearless fame :

When Spain reeled shattered helpless from thy guns
 And splendid ire,
 When from Canadian snows to Indian suns
 Pitt's soul was fire.

O that in days like these were, fair and free
 From shame and scorn,
 Fate had allowed, benignly, pityingly
 That I was born !

O that, if struck, then struck with glorious wounds,
 I bore apart
 (Not torn with fangs of leprous coward hounds)
 My bleeding heart !

II

We hate You—not because of cruel deeds
 Staining a glorious effort. They who live
 Learn in this earth to give and to forgive,
 Where heart and soul are noble and fate's needs
 Imperious : No, nor yet that cruel seeds
 Of power and wrong you've sown alternative,
 We hate You, we your sons who yet believe
 That truth and justice are not empty creeds !

No, but because of greed and garbled pay,
 Wages of sin and death : because you smother
 Your conscience, making cursèd all the day.
 Bible in one hand, bludgeon in the other,
 Cain-like you come upon and slay your brother,
 And, kneeling down, thank God for it, and pray !

III

I whom you fed with shame and starved with woe,
 I wheel above You,
 Your fatal vulture, for I hate You so,
 I almost love You !

I smell your ruin out. I light and croak
 My sombre lore,
 As swaggering You go by, O "heart of oak"
 Rotten to the core !

Look westward ! Ireland's vengeful eyes are cast
 On freedom won.
 Look eastward ! India stirs from sleep at last.
 You are undone !

Look southward, where Australia hears your voice,
 And turns away !
 O brutal Hypocrite, she makes her choice
 With the rising day !

Foul Esau, you who sold your high birthright
 For gilded mud,
 Who did the wrong and, priestlike, called it right,
 And swindled God !—

*The hour is gone of insult, pain and patience ;
 The hour is come
 When they arise, the faithful mightier Nations,
 To drag you down !*

IV

England, the land I loved
 With passionate pride,
 For hate of whom I live
 Who for love had died,

Can I, while shines the sun,
 That hour regain
 When I again may come to you
 And love again?

No, not while that Flag
 Of greed and lust
 Flaunts in the air, untaught
 To drag the dust!—

Never, till expiant,
 I see You kneel,
 And, brandished, gleams aloft
 The foeman's steel!

Ah, then to speed, and laugh,
 As my heart caught the knife
*"Mother, I love you! Here,
 Here is my life!"*

Hong-Kong Lyrics

I

AT anchor in that harbour of the island,
 The Chinese Gate,
 We lay where, terraced under green-clad highland,
 The Sea-town sate.

Ships, steamers, sailers, many a flag and nation,
 A motley crew,
 Junks, sampans, all East's swarming jubilation,
 I watched and knew.

Then, as I stood, sweet sudden sounds out-swelling
 On the boon breeze,
 The church-bells' chiming echoes rang out, telling
 Of inland peace.

O English Chimes, your music rising and falling
 I cannot praise,
 Although to me it come sweet-sad, recalling
 Dear childish days.

Yet, English Chimes—last links of chains that sever,
 Worn out and done,
 That Land and Creed that I have left for ever—
 Ring on, ring on !

II

There is much in this sea-way City
 I have not met with before,
 But one or two things I notice
 That I seem to have known of yore.

In the lovely tropical verdure,
 In the streets, behold I can
 The hideous English Buildings
 And the brutal English Man !

III

I stand and watch the Soldiers
Marching up and down,
Above the fresh green Cricket-ground
Just outside the town.

I stand and watch and wonder
When in the English land
This poor fool Tommy Atkins
Will learn and understand ?

Zulus, and Boers, and Arabs,
All fighting to be free,
Men and women and children,
Maimed and murdered has he.

In India and in Ireland
He's held the People down,
While the robber English Gentleman
Took pound and penny and crown.

To make him false to his Order,
What was it that they gave—
To make him his brother's oppressor ?
The clothes and soul of a slave !

O thou poor fool; Tommy Atkins,
Thou wilt be wise that day
When, with eager eyes and clenched teeth,
Thou risest up to say :

*" This is our well-loved England,
And I'll free it if I can,
From every rotten Shop-keeper,
And played-out Gentleman ! "*

IV

“Happy Valley” *

(*“This is the love of Nature, that the same peace awaits us all”*)

There is a valley green that lies
’Mid hills, the summer’s bower.
The many-coloured butterflies
Flutter from flower to flower.

And round one lush green side of it,
In gardened homes are laid,
With grief and care compassionate,
The People of the Dead.

There all the voicing summer day
They sing, the happy rills.
No noisy sound awakes away
The echoes of the hills.

A Glimpse of China

I

In a Sampan

(*Min River, Fo Kien*)

UP in the misty morning,
Up past the gardened hills,
With the rhythmic stroke of the rowers,
While the blue deep pales and thrills!

* This graveyard, one side of a gully, which suddenly expands and leaves its base large enough for the local race-course, is in summer one of the loveliest spots on earth. Hindoos, Protestants, Catholics, and Mahomedans have their separate portions. Here in regimental or individual tombs is to be found the record of noble lives thrown away in the iniquity of the English relations with China.

Past the rice-fields green low-lying,
 Where the sea-gull's winging down
 From the fleets of junks and sampans
 And the ancient Chinese Town!

II

In a Chair

(*Foo-chow*)

From the bright and blinding sunshine,
 From the whirling locust's song,
 Into the dark and narrow fissures
 Of the streets I am borne along.

Here and there dusky-beaming
 A sun-shaft broadens and drops
 On the brown bare crowd slow-passing,
 The crowd of the open shops.

We move on over the bridges
 With their straight-hewn blocks of stone,
 And their quaint grey animal figures,
 And the booths the hucksters own.

Behind a linen awning
 Sits an ancient wight half-dead,
 And a little dear of a girl is
 Examining—his head.

On a bended bamboo shouldered,
 Bearing a block of stone,
 Two worn-out Coolies half-naked
 Utter their grunting groan.

Children, almond-eyed beauties,
 Impossibly mangy curs,
 Take part in the motley stream of
 Insouciant passengers.

This is the Dream, the Vision
That comes to me and greets—
The Vision of Retribution
In the labyrinthine streets.

III

“Caste”

These Chinese toil, and yet they do not starve,
And they obey, and yet they are not slaves.
It is the “free-born” fuddled Englishmen
Who grovel rotting in their living graves.

These Chinese do not fawn with servile lips;
They lift up equal eyes that ask and scan.
Their degradation has escaped at least
That choicest curse of all—the Gentleman!

IV

Over the Samovar *

(*Foo-chow*)

“Yes, I used always to think
That you Russians knew
How to make the good drink
As none others do.

“And I thought moreover,
(Not with the epicures),
You might search the world over
For such Women as yours.

“In both these matters now
I perceive I was right,
And I really can't tell you how
Much I delight

* The Russian tea-urn.

To Japan

“In my third (Thanks, another cup!)
 Idea of the fun,
 When your Country gets up
 And follows the sun!

“And just as in Europe, see,
 There's a Conqueror Nation,
 So why not in Asia be
 A like jubilation?

“Taught as well as organized,*
 The eternal Coolie,
 From being robbed and despised,
 Takes to cutting throats duly!

“But—please, don't be flurried;
 For I daresay by then
 You'll be comfortably buried,
 Ladies and gentlemen!

“No more, thanks! I must be going!
 I'm so glad to have made this
 Opportunity of knowing
 Some more Russian ladies!”

To Japan

SIMPLE You were, and good. No kindlier heart
 Beat than the heart within your gentle breast.
 Labour You had, and happiness, and rest,
 And were the maid of nations. Now You start
 To feverish life, feeling the poisonous smart
 Upon your lips of harlot lips close-pressed,
 The lips of Her who stands among the rest
 With greasy righteous soul and rotten heart.

* In China the system of Trades Unions is admirable. Coolie is the generic term in the East for labourer.

O sunrise land, O land of gentleness,
 What madness drives you to lust's hateful bed?
 O thrice-accursèd England, wretchedness
 For ever be on you, of whom 'tis said,
 Prostitute plague-struck, that you catch and kiss
 Innocent lives to make them foully dead!

Dai Butsu *

(*Kama Kura*)

HE sits. Upon the kingly head doth rest
 The round-balled wimple, and the heavy rings
 Touch on the shoulders where the shadow clings.
 The downward garment shows the ambiguous breast;
 The Face—that Face one scarce can look on, lest
 One learn the secret of unspeakable things;
 But the dread gaze descends with shudderings,
 To the veiled couched knees, the hands and thumbs close pressed.
 O lidded, downcast Eyes that bear the weight
 Of all our woes and terrible wrong's increase:
 Proud Nostrils, Lips proud-perfecter than these,
 With what a soul within you do you wait!
 Disdain and pity, love late-born of hate,
 Passion eternal, patience, pride and peace!

England

WHERE'ER I go in this dense East,
 In sunshine or shade,
 I retch at the villainous feast
 That England has made,

* This is one of the three well-known Japanese colossi of Gautama, the Buddha. The same type of proud patience marks this embodiment of the suffering East, wherever we meet it.

A South-Sea Islander

And my shame cannot understand,
As scorn springs elate,
How I ever loved that land
I loathe and hate !

The Fisherman

(*Mindanao, Philippines*)

IN the dark waveless sea,
Deep blue under deep blue,
The fisher drifts by on the tide
In his small pole-balanced canoe.

Above him the cloud-capped hills
Crown the dense jungly sweeps ;
The cocoa-nut groves hedge round
The hut where the beach-wave sleeps.

Is it not better so
To be as this Savage is,
Than to live the Wage-slave's life
Of hopeless agonies ?

A South-Sea Islander

ALOLL in the warm clear water,
On her back with languorous limbs,
She lies. The baby upon her breasts
Paddles and falls and swims.

With half-closed eyes she smiles,
 Guarding it with her hands ;
 And the sob swells up in my heart—
 In my heart that understands.

*Dear, in the English country,
 The hatefullest land on earth,
 The mothers are starved and the children die,
 And death is better than birth !*

New Guinea "Converts"

I SAW them as they were born,
 Erect and fearless and free,
 Facing the sun and the wind
 Of the hills and the sea.

I saw them naked, superb,
 Like the Greeks long ago,
 With shield and spear and arrow
 Ready to strike and throw.

I saw them as they were made
 By the Christianizing crows,
 Blinking, stupid, clumsy,
 In their greasy ill-cut clothes :

I heard their gibbering cant,
 And they sung those hymns that smell
 Of poor souls besotted, degraded
 With the fear of "God" and "Hell."

And I thought if Jesus could see them,
 He who loved the freedom, the light,
 And loathed those who compassed heaven
 And earth for one proselyte,

A Death at Sea

To make him, etcetera, etcetera,—
 Then this sight, as on me or you,
 Would act on him like an emetic,
 And he'd have to go off and spue.

O Jesus, O man of the People,
 Who died to abolish all this—
 The Pharisee rank and respectable,
 The Scribe and the scabrous Priest—

O Jesus, O sacred Socialist,
 You would die again of shame,
 If you were alive and could see
 What things are done in your Name.

A Death at Sea

(*Coral Sea, Australia*)

I

DEAD in the sheep-pen he lies,
 Wrapped in an old brown sail.
 The smiling blue sea and the skies
 Know not sorrow nor wail.

Dragged up out of the hold,
 Dead on his last way home,
 Worn-out, wizened, a Chinnee old,—
 O he is safe—at home!

Brother, I stand not as these
 Staring upon you here.
 One of earth's patient toilers at peace
 I see, I revere!

II

In the warm cloudy night we go
From the motionless ship ;
Our lanterns feebly glow ;
Our oars drop and drip.

We land on the thin pale beach,
The coral isle 's round us ;
A glade of driven sand we reach ;
Our burial ground's found us.

There we dig him a grave, jesting ;
We know not his name.
What heeds *he* who is resting, resting ?
Would I were the same !

Come away, it is over and done !
Peace and he shall not sever,
By moonlight nor light of the sun,
For ever and ever !

III

Dirge

*" Sleep in the pure driven sand,
(No one will know)
In the coral isle by the land
Where the blue tides come and go.*

*" Alive, thou wert poor, despised ;
Dead, thou canst have
What mightiest monarchs have prized,
An eternal grave !*

*" Alone with the lovely isles,
With the lovely deep,
Where the sea-winds sing and the sunlight smiles,
Thou liest asleep ! "*

III. Australia

The Outcasts

(*Melbourne*)

HERE to the parks they come,
The scourings of the town,
Like weary wounded animals
Seeking where to lie them down.

Brothers, let us take together
An easeful period.
There is worse than to be as We are—
Cast out, not of Men but of God!

In the Sea-Gardens

(*Sydney*)

“The Man of the Nation”

YONDER the band is playing
And the fine Young People walk.
They are envying each other and talking
Their pretty empty talk.

There in the shade on the outskirts,
Stretched on the grass I see
A Man with a slouch hat smoking,
That is the Man for me!

That is the Man of the Nation ;
He works and much endures.
When all the rest is rotten,
He rises and cuts and cures.

He's the soldier of the Crimea,
Fighting to honour fools ;
He's the grappler and strangler of Lee,
Lord of the terrible tools.

He's in all the conquered nations
That have won their own at last,
And in all that yet shall win it.
And the World by him goes past !

O strong sly World, this nameless
Still, much-enduring Man,
Is the Hand of God that shall clutch you
For all you have done or can !

Labour—Capital—Land

IN that rich Archipelago of sea
With fiery hills, thick woods wherein the mias*
Browses along the trees, and god-like men
Leave monuments of speech too large for us,†
There are strange forest-trees. Far up, their roots
Spread from the central trunk, and settle down
Deep in the life-fed earth, seventy feet below.
In the past days here grew another tree,
On whose high fork the parasitic seed
Fell and sprang up, and finding life and strength
In the disease, decrepitude and death
Of that it fed on, utterly consumed it,
And stands the monument of Nature's crime !

* Orang-utan.

† The Buddhistic temple in Java, known as the temple of Borobodo.

So Labour with his parasites, the two
Great swollen Robbers, Land and Capital,
Stands to the gaze of men but as a heap
Of rotted dust whose only use must be
To rich the roots of the proud stem that killed it ! *

Australia

I SEE a Land of desperate droughts and floods :
I see a land where Need keeps spreading round,
And all but giants perish in the stress :
I see a Land where more, and more, and more
The demons, Earth and Wealth, grow bloat and strong.

I see a Land that lies a helpless prey
To wealthy cliques and gamblers and their slaves,
The huckster politicians : a poor Land
That less and less can make her heart-wish law.

Yea, but I see a Land where some few brave
Raise clear eyes to the struggle that must come,
Reaching firm hands to draw the doubters in,
Preaching the gospel : " Drill and drill and drill ! "
Yea, but I see a Land where best of all
The hope of Victory burns strong and bright !

Art

" YES, let Art go, if it must be
That with it men must starve—
If Music, Painting, Poetry
Spring from the wasted hearth ! "

* This explanation of these curious arboreal growths is Mr. Alfred Wallace's (*Malay Archipelago*, chapter v.), and in this matter also we may perhaps be content to rely on that "innate genius for solving difficulties" which Darwin has assigned to the illustrious naturalist whom Socialism is proud to number among her sons.

Yes, let Art go, till once again
Through fearless heads and hands
The toil of millions and the pain
Be passed from out the lands :

Till from the few their plunder falls
To those who've toiled and earned
But misery's hopeless intervals
From those who've robbed and spurned.

Yes, let Art go, without a fear,
Like Autumn flowers we burn,
For, with her reawakening year,
Be sure she will return !—

Return, but greater, nobler yet
Because her laurel crown
With dew and not with blood is wet,
And as our Queen sit down !

Henry George

(*Melbourne*)

I CAME to buy a book. It was a shop
Down in a narrow quiet street, and here
They kept, I knew, these socialistic books.
I entered. All was bare, but clean and neat.
The shelves were ranged with unsold wares ; the counter
Held a few sheets and papers. Here and there
Hung prints and calendars. I rapped, and straight
A young Girl came out through the inner door.
She had a clear and simple face ; I saw
She had no beauty, loveliness, nor charm,
But, as your eyes met those grey light-lit eyes
Like to a mountain spring so pure, you thought :
“ He'd be a clever man who looked, and lied ! ”

I asked her for the book. . . . We spoke a little.
 Her words were as her face was, as her eyes.
 Yes, she'd read many books like this of mine :
 Also some poets, Shelley, Byron too,
 And Tennyson, but "poets only dreamed !"
 Thus, then, we talked, until by chance I spoke
 A phrase and then a name. 'Twas "Henry George."
 Her face lit up. O it was beautiful,
 Or never woman's face was ! "Henry George ?"
 She said. And then a look, a flush, a smile,
 Such as sprung up in Magdalenè's cheek
 When some voice uttered Jesus, made her angel.
 She turned and pointed up the counter. I,
 Loosing mine eyes from that ensainted face,
 Looked also. 'Twas a print, a common print,
 The head and shoulders of a man. She said,
 Quite in a whisper : "*That's him, Henry George !*"

Darling, that in this life of wrong and woe,
 The lovely woman-soul within you brooded
 And wept and loved and hated and pitied,
 And knew not what its helplessness could do,
 Its helplessness, its sheer bewilderment—
 That then those eyes should fall, those angel eyes,
 On one who'd brooded, wept, loved, hated, pitied,
 Even as you had, but therefrom had sprung
 A hope, a plan, a scheme to right this wrong,
 And make this woe less hateful to the sun—
 And that pure soul had found its Master thus
 To listen to, remember, watch and love,
 And trust the dawn that rose up through the dark :
 O this was good
 For me to see, as for some weary hopeless
 Longer and toiler for "the Kingdom of Heaven"
 To stand some lifeless twilight hour, and hear,
 There in a dim-lit house of Lazarus,
 Mary who said : "Thus, thus he looked, he spake,
 The Master !" —So to hear her rapturous words,
 And gaze upon her up-raised heavenly face !

William Wallace

(For the Ballarat statue of him)

THIS is Scotch William Wallace. It was He
Who in dark hours first raised his face to see :
Who watched the English tyrant Nobles spurn,
Steel-clad, with iron hoofs the Scottish Free :

Who armed and drilled the simple footman Kern,
Yea, bade in blood and rout the proud Knight learn
His Feudalism was dead, and Scotland stand
Dauntless to wait the day of Bannockburn !

O Wallace, peerless lover of thy land,
We need thee still, thy moulding brain and hand !
For us, thy poor, again proud tyrants spurn,
The robber Rich, a yet more hateful band !

The Australian Flag

PURE blue Flag of heaven
With your silver stars,
Not beside those Crosses'
Blood-stained torture-bars :

Not beside the token
The foul sea-harlot gave,
Pure blue Flag of heaven,
Must you ever wave !

No, but young exultant,
Free from care and crime,
The soulless selfish England
Of this later time :

To His Love

No, but, faithful, noble
 Rising from her grave,
 Flag of light and liberty,
 For ever must you wave !

To an old Friend in England

WAS it for nothing in the years gone by,
 O my love, O my friend,
 You thrilled me with your noble words of faith ?—
 Hope beyond life, and love, love beyond death !
 Yet now I shudder, and yet you did not die,
 O my friend, O my love !

Was it for nothing in the dear dead years,
 O my love, O my friend,
 I kissed you when you wrung my heart from me,
 And gave my stubborn hand where trust might be ?
 Yet then I smiled, and see, these bitter tears,
 O my friend, O my love !

No bitter words to say to you have I,
 O my love, O my friend !
 That faith, that hope, that love was mine, not yours !
 And yet that kiss, that clasp endures, endures.
 I have no bitter words to say. Good-bye,
 O my friend, O my love !

To his Love

“TEACH me, love, to be true ;
 Teach me, love, to love ;
 Teach me to be pure like you.
 It will be more than enough !

“Ah, and in days to come,
Give me, my seraph, too,
A son nobler than I,
A daughter true like you :

“A son to battle the wrong,
To seek and strive for the right ;
A beautiful daughter of song,
To point us on to the light !”

Her Poem

“My baby girl, that was born and died
on the same day ”

“**W**ITH wild torn heart I see them still,
Wee unused clothes and empty cot.
Though glad my love has missed the ill
That falls to woman's lot.

“No tangled paths for her to tread
Throughout the coming changeful years ;
No desperate weird to dread and dread ;
No bitter lonely tears !

“No woman's piercing crown of thorns
Will press my aching baby's brow ;
No starless nights, no sunless morns,
Will ever greet her now.

“The clothes that I had wrought with care
Through weary hours for love's sweet sake
Are laid aside, and with them there
A heart that seemed to break,”

To Karl Marx

NOT for the thought that burns on keen and clear,
 Heat that the heat has turned from red to white,
 The passion of the lone remembering night
 One with the patience day must see and hear—
 Not for the shafts the lying foemen fear,
 Shot from the soul's intense self-centring light—
 But for the heart of love divine and bright,
 We praise you, worker, thinker, poet, seer !
 Man of the People—faithful in all parts,
 The veins' last drop, the brain's last flickering dole,
 You on whose forehead beams the aureole
 That hope and "certain hope" alone imparts—
 Us have you given your perfect heart and soul ;
 Wherefore receive as yours our souls and hearts.

Algernon Charles Swinburne

SHRIEKS out of smoke, a flame of dung-straw fire
 That is not quenched but hath for only fruit
 What writhes and dies not in its rotten root :
 Two things made flesh, the visible desire
 To match in filth the skunk, the ape in ire,*
 Mouthing before the mirrors with wild foot
 Beyond all feebler footprint of pursuit,
 The perfect twanger of the Chinese lyre !
 A heart with generous virtues run to seed
 In vices making all a jumbled creed :
 A soul that knows not love nor trust nor shame,
 But cuts itself with knives to bawl and bleed—
 If thou we've known of late, art still the same,
 What need, O soul, to sign thee with thy name ?

* His attack on Carlyle, for instance, of which the prose part is the fouler, the verse part the more virulent.

Once on thy lips the golden-honeyed bees
Settling made sweet the heart that was not strong,
And sky and earth and sea swooned into song : *
Once on thine eyes the light of agonies
Flashed through the soul and robbed the days of ease. †
But tunes turn stale when love turns babe, and long
The exiled gentlemen grow fat with wrong,
And peasants, workmen, beggars, what are these ? ‡
O you who sang the Italian smoke above—
Mud-lark of Freedom, pipe of that vile band
Whose envy slays the tyrant, not the love
Of these poor souls none have the keeping of—
It is your hand—it is your pander hand
Smites the bruised mouth of pilloried Ireland !

To Sydney Jephcott

(The friend my verse won for me)

With a Copy of My "Poetical Works"

"TAKE with all my heart, friend, this,
The labour of my past,
Though the heart here hidden is
And the soul's eternities
Hold the present fast.

"Take it, still, with soul and heart,
Pledge of that dear day
When the shadows stir and start,
By the bright Sun burst apart—
Young Australia !"

* *Poems and Ballads* (1st series).

† *Songs before Sunrise*.

‡ The picturesque Italian gentlemen who struggled (some of them) so heroically for Italian Nationalism represent to-day a tyranny deeper and more dark than that of the Austrian foreigners, the tyranny of *caste*. The certainty of popularity was the bait held out by the rancorous respectability of the *London Times*, and poetical vanity swallowed it, making Mr. Swinburne also among the panders in his denunciation of Irish Nationalism.

“ Father Abe ”

“ Father Abe ”

(Song of the American Sons of Labour)

The Song

O WE knew so well, dear Father,
When we answered to your call,
And the Southern Moloch stricken
Shook and tottered to his fall—

O we knew so well you loved us,
And our hearts beat back to yours
With the rapturous adoration
That through all the years endures !

Mothers, sisters bade us hasten
Sweethearts, wives with babe at breast ;
For the Union, faith and freedom,
For our hero of the West !

And we wrung forth victory blood-stained
From the desperate hands of Crime,
And our Cause blazed out Man's beacon
Through the endless future time !

And forgiven, forever we bade it
Cease, that envy, hatred, strife,
As he willed, our murdered Father
That had sealed his love with life !

O dear Father, was it thus, then ?
Did we this but in a dream ?
Is it real, this hideous present ?
Does our suffering only seem ?

Bend and listen, look and tell us !
Are these joyless toilers We ?
Slaves more wretched, patient, piteous
Than the slaves we fought to free !

Are these weak, worn girls and women
 Those whose mothers yet can tell
 How they kissed and clasped men god-like
 With fierce faces fronting hell ?

Bend and listen, look and tell us !
 Is this silent waste, possessed
 By bloat thieves and their task-masters,
 Thy free, thy fair, thy fearless West ?

Are these Eastern mobs of wage-slaves,
 Are these cringing debauchees,
 Sons of those who slung their rifles—
 Shook the old Flag to the breeze ?

The Answer

Men and boys, O fathers, brothers,
 Burst these fetters round you bound.
 Women, sisters, wives and mothers,
 Lift your faces from the ground !

O Democracy, O People,
 East and West and North and South,
 Rise together, one for ever,
 Strike this Crime upon the mouth !

Bid them not, the men who loved you,
 Those who fought for you and died,
 Scorn you that you broke a small Crime,
 Left a great Crime pass in pride !

England, France, the played-out countries,
 Let them reek there in their stew,
 Let their past rot out their present,
 But the Future is with you !

O America, O first-born
 Of the age that yet shall be
 Where all men shall be as one man,
 Noble, faithful, fearless, free !—

“ A Fool ”

O America, O paramour
Of the foul slave-owner Pelf,
You who saved from slavery others,
Now from slavery save yourself!—

Save yourself, though, anguish-shaken,
You cry out and bow your head,
Crying “ Why am I forsaken ? ”
Crying “ It is finishèd ! ”

Save yourself, no God will save you ;
Not one angel can he give !
They and He are dead and vanished,
And 'tis you, 'tis you must live !

Risen again, fire-tried, victorious,
From the grave of Crime down-hurled,
Peerless, pure, serene and glorious,
Wield the sceptre of the world !

“ A Fool ”

(Brisbane)

HE asked me of my friend—“ *a clever man ;
Such various talent, business, journalism ;
A pen that might some day have sent out ‘ leaders’
From our greatest newspapers.* ”—“ Yes, all this,
All this,” I said,—“ *And yet he will not rise ?
He’ll stay a ‘ comp.,’ a printer all his life ?* ”—
I said : “ Just that, a workman all his life.”
But, as my questioner was a business man,
One of the sons of Capital, a sage
Whose Practicality saw (I can suppose)
Quite to his nose-tip or even his finger-ends,
I vouchsafed explanation. “ This young man,
My friend, was born and bred a workman. All
His heart and soul (and men have souls and hearts

Other than those the doctor proses of,
 The parson prates of, and both make their trade)
 Were centred in his comradeship and love.
 His friends, his ‘mates’ were workmen, and the girl
 He wooed, and made a happy wife and mother,
 Had heart and soul like him in whence she sprung.
 Observe now ! When he came to think and read,
 He saw (it seemed to him he saw) in what
 Capitalists, Employers, men like you,
 Think and call ‘justice’ in your inter-dealings,
 Some slight mistakes (I fancy *he’d* say ‘wrongs’)
 Whereby his order suffered. So he wonders :
 ‘*Cannot we change this ?*’ And he tries and tries,
 Knowing his fellows and adapting all
 His effort in the channels that they know.
 You understand ? He’s ‘only an Unionist !’
 Now for the second point. This man believes
 That these mistakes—these wrongs (we’ll pass the word)
 Spring from a certain thing called ‘competition’
 Which you (and I) know is a God-given thing
 Whereby the fittest get up to the top
 (That’s I—or you) and tread down all the others.
 Well, this man sees how by this God-given thing
 He has the chance to use his extra wits
 And clamber up : he sees how others have—
 (Like you—or me ; my father’s father’s father
 Was a market-gardener and, I trust, a good one).
 He sees, moreover, how perpetually
 Each of his fellows who has extra wits
 Has used them as the fox fallen in the well
 Used the confiding goat, and how the goats
 More and more wallow there and stupefy,
 Robbed of the little wit the hapless crowd
 Had in their general haplessness. Well, then
 This man of mine (this is against all law,
 Human, divine and natural, I admit)
 Prefers to wallow there and not get out,
 Except they all can ! I’ve made quite a tale
 About what is quite simple. Yet ’tis curious,

As I see you hold. Now frankly tell me, will you,
What do you think of him ? ” — “ *He is a fool !* ”

“ He is a fool ? There is no doubt of it !

But I am told that it was some such fool

Came once from Galilee, and ended on

A criminal’s cross outside Jerusalem,—

And that this fool, he and his criminal’s cross,

Broke up an Empire that seemed adamant,

And made a new world, which, renewed again,

Is Europe still.

He is a fool ! And it was some such fool

Drudged up and down the earth these later years,

And wrote a Book the other fools bought up

In tens of thousands, calling it a Gospel.

And this fool too, and the fools that follow him,

Or hold with him, why, he and they shall all

End in the mad-house, or the gutter, where

They’ll chew the husk of their mad dreams and die ! ”

“ *Well, what are their follies but dreams ? They have done
nothing,*

And never will ! ” . . .

“ One moment ! I have just a word to say.

How comes it, tell me, friend, six weeks ago

A ‘comp.’ was sent a-packing for a cause

His fellows thought unjust, and that same night

(Or, rather, the next morning) in comes one

To tell you (quite politely) that unless

That ‘comp.’ was setting at his frame they feared

One of our greatest newspapers would not go

That day a harbinger of light and leading

To gladden and instruct its thousands ? And,

If I remember right, it did—and so did he,

That wretched ‘comp.’ set at his frame, and does !

How came it also that three months ago

Your brother, the shipowner, ‘sacked’ a man

Out of his ship, and bade him go to hell ?

And in the evening up came two or three,

Discreetly asking him to state the cause ?

And when he said he’d see them with the other,

(Videlicet, in hell), they said they feared,
Unless the other came thence (if he was there),
And was upon his ship to-morrow morning,
It would not sail. It did not sail till noon,
And he sailed with it !
But this is all beside the point ! Our ' comp.,'
Who sweats there, and who will not write you ' leaders '
Except to help a friend who's fallen ill,
Why, he, beyond a doubt he is—a fool ! ”

The Mass of Christ

I

DOWN in the woodlands, where the streamlet runs,
Close to the breezy river, by the dells
Of ferns and flowers that shun the summer suns
But gather round the lizard-haunted wells,
And listen to the birds' sweet syllables—

Down in the woodlands, lying in the shade,
Among the rushes green that shook and gleamed,
I, I whose songs were of my heart's blood made,
Found weary rest from wretchedness, it seemed,
And fell asleep, and as I slept, I dreamed.

II

I dreamed I stood beside a pillar vast
Close to a little open door behind,
Whence the small light there was stole in aghast,
And for a space this troubled all my mind,
To lose the sunlight and the sky and the wind.

For I could know, I felt, how all before,
Though high and wonderful and to be praised,
In heart and soul and mind oppressed me sore.
Nevertheless, I turned, and my face raised,
And on that pageant and its glory gazed.

The pillars, vast as this whereby I stood,
Hedged all the place about and towered up high,
Up, and were lost within a billowy cloud
Of slow blue-wreathing smoke that fragrantly
Rose from below. And a great chaunt and cry

Of multitudinous voices, with sweet notes,
Mingled of music solemn, glad, serene,
Swayed all the air and gave its echoes throats.
And priests and singers various, with proud mien,
Filled all the choir—a strange and wondrous scene.

And men and women and children, in all hues
Of colour and fresh raiment, filled the nave ;
And yet it seemed, this vast place did refuse
Room for the mighty army that did crave,
And only to the vanguard harbourage gave.

And, as I gazed and watched them while they knelt
(Their prayers I watched with the incense disappear),
And could not know my thoughts of it, I felt
A touch upon mine arm, and in mine ear
Some words, and turned my face to see and hear.

There was a man beside me. In that light,
Tho' dim, remote, and shadowy, I could see
His face swarthy yet pale, and eyes like night,
With a strange, far sadness, looking at me.
It seemed as if the buffets of some sea

Had beaten on him as he faced it long.
The salty foam, the spittle of its wrath
Had blurred the bruises of its fingers strong,
Striking him pitilessly from out its path,
Yet had he braved it as the willow hath.

He turned his look from me and where we stood,
His far strange look of sadness, and it seemed
This temple vast, this prayerful multitude,
These priests and singers celebrant who streamed
In gorgeous ranks towards the fane that gleamed,

Were to him as some vision is, untrue,
 Tho' true we take it, undeceived the while,
 But, since it was unknown to him all through,
 And hid some meaning (it might be of guile),
 He turned once more, and spake in gentle style.

"Nay, this," he said, "is not the Temple, nor
 The children of Israel these, whom less sufficed
 Of chaunt and ritual. They whom we abhor,
 The Phœnicians, to their gods have sacrificed!"
 I said, "Nay, sir, this is the Mass of Christ."

"The Mass of Christ?" he murmured. And I said
 "This is the day on which He came below,
 And this is Rome, and far up overhead
 Soars the great dome that bids the wide world know
 St. Peter still rules o'er his Church below!"

"The Christ?" he said, "and Peter, who are they?"
 I answered, "Jesus was he in the days long past,
 And Peter was his chief disciple." "Nay,"
 He answered, "for of these the lot was cast
 On poverty." I said, "That is all past!"

Then as I might, as for some stranger great
 (Who saw all things under an unknown sun),
 I told him of these things both soon and late,
 Then, when I paused and turned, lo! he was gone,
 Had left me, and I saw him passing on.

On, up the aisle, he passed, his long black hair
 Upon his brown and common coat; his head
 Raised, and his mien such aspect fixed did wear
 As one may have whose spirit long is sped
 (Though he still lives) among the mighty dead.

He paused not, neither swerved not, till he came
 Unto the fane and steps. Nor there he learned
 Awe, but went on, till rose a shrill acclaim,
 And the High Priest from the great altar turned,
 And raised the golden sign that blazed and burned.

And a slow horror grew upon us all—
On priests and people, and on us who gazed—
As that Great King, alive beneath the pall,
Heard his own death-service that moaned and praised : *
So all we were fearful, expectant, dazed.

Then unknown murmurs round the High Priest rose
Of men in doubt ; and all the multitude
Swayed, as one seized in a keen travail's throes,
Where, on the last steps of the altar stood,
The Man—the altar steps all red like blood.

The singing ceased ; the air grew clear and dead,
Save for the organ tones that sobbed and sighed.
In a hushed voice the High Priest gazing, said,
“ Who are you ? ” and the Man straightway replied,
“ I, I am Jesus whom they crucified ! ”

His voice was low yet every ear there heard,
And every eye was fixed upon him fast ;
And, when he spake, the people all shuddered,
As a great corn-field at the south wind's blast,
And the Man paused, but spake again at last :

“ I am the Galilean. I was born
Of Joseph and of Mary in Nazareth.
But God, our Father, left me not forlorn,
But breathèd in my soul his sacred breath,
That I should be his prophet, and fear not death.

“ I taught the Kingdom of Heaven ; the poor, the oppressed
I loved. The rich, the priests, did hear my cry
Of hate and retribution that lashed their rest.
Wherefore they caught and took and scourged me. I
Was crucified with the thieves on Calvary ! ”

* The Emperor Charles V., mightiest of mediæval kings, had the weird fancy to assist at a representation of his own death service.

At that it seemed the very stones did quake,
 And a great rumour grew and filled the place ;
 The pillars, the roof, the dome above did shake,
 And a fierce cry and arms surged up apace,
 Like to a storm-cloud round that dark pale face.

And yet once more he spake, and we did hear :
 " Who are you ? What is this you do ? " he said.
 " I was the Christ. Who is this here
 You worship ? " From that silence of the dead,
 " Tear him in pieces," cried a voice and fled.

Howls, yells, and execrations, blazing eyes,
 And threatening arms—it was unloosened hell !
 And in the midst, seized, dragged along with cries
 Of hate exultant, still I saw him well,
 His strange sad face ; then sickened, swooned, and fell !

III

Slowly from out that trance did I arouse ;
 Slowly, with pain, and all was weary and still,
 Even as a dreamer dreams some sweet carouse,
 And faints at touch of breath and lips that thrill,
 And yet awakes and yet is dreaming still.

So I. And when my tired eyes look, mine ears,
 Echoing those late noises, listen, and
 I seek to know what 'fore me now appears,
 For long I cannot know nor understand,
 But lie as some wrecked sailor on the strand.

Then bit by bit I knew it—how I lay
 On the hard stones, crouched by a pillar tall :
 The wind blew bleak and raw ; the skies were grey ;
 Up broad stone steps folk passed into the wall,
 Both men and women : there was no sun at all.

I moved, I rose, I came close to, and saw ;
And then I knew the place wherein I was ;
Here in the city high, the ravening maw
Of all men's toil and kindly Nature's laws,
I stood, and felt the dreary winter's flaws.

And by me rose that lampless edifice
Of England's soul shrunk to a skeleton,
Whose dingy cross the grimy air doth pierce—
London, that hell of wastefulness and stone,
The piled bones of the sufferers dead and gone !

And, when I knew all this, and thought of it,
And thought of all the hateful hours and dread
That smirched my youth here, struck, and stabbed, and lit
The plundered shrine of trust and love that fled,
And left my soul stripped, bleeding worse than dead,

Wrath grew in me. For all around I knew
The accursed city worked on all the same,
For all the toiling sufferers. The idle few,
The vermin foul that from this dung-heap came,
Made of our agony their feast and game.

And when, with hands clenched tight, with eyes of fire,
Sombre and desperate, I moved on apace,
Within my soul brooded a dark desire ;
I reached the stream of those who sought this place,
And turned with them and saw a sudden face.

I knew it, as it was there, meeting mine—
I knew it with its strange sad gaze, the eyes
Night-like. Yet on it now no more did shine,
As 'twere that inner light of victories,
Won from the fiend that lives by the god that dies.

But very weary, as my waking was,
But stunned, it seemed, and as if cowed at last,
Were look and bearing of him : I felt the cause
Even as I looked. My wrath and thought were passed
I came and took his arm and held it fast.

The Mass of Christ 101

And, as some fever-struck delirious man,
In some still pausing of his anguish-throes,
Forgetful of it all, how it began,
Rises from off his bed and dons his clothes,
And seeks (his footsteps seek) some place he knows ;

And there he wanders voiceless, like a ghost,
His weariness confusing him, until
Worn-out, he helplessly perceives he's lost :
So was he here, this man, stricken and still—
Day, place, folk, all incomprehensible !

My hold aroused him. We looked face in face,
And in a little I could watch the wonder,
“Where he had seen me,” in his great eyes, chase
The torpor and oblivion asunder.
Close by there was a porch, I drew him under.

There, after pause, I asked, “What do you here ?”
He said : “I came, I think, to seek and see
Something which I much long for and yet fear.
I have passed over many a land and sea
I never knew : my Father guided me.

“I think,” he said, “that I am come to find
Here, in this cold dark place, what in that blue
And sunny south but wounded all my mind.
But I am weary and cannot see things true,
There is a cloud around me. And with you ?”

“Come, then,” I said, “come then, if you must know
What that great saint hath done for us, who is
The second builder of your Church below.
Paul, that was Saul, the Prince of Charities !
He saw you once. Now see *him* once—in this !”

We went out side by side into the stream
Of folk that passed on upwards thro' the wall
(There was a gateway there), and in the beam
Of the dull light we stood and pillars tall,
And I said “Look,” and he looked at it all.

102 The Mass of Christ

Somewhat it was as he had seen before,
Yet darker, gloomier, though some hues were gay.
For all these people had, it seemed, full store
Of quiet ease, and loved the leisured day;
They sang of joy, but little joy had they.

It was the function of the rich, of those
To whom contentment springs from booty's fill,
Gorged to a dull, religious, rank repose.
He raised his voice. He spake the words, "I will!"
There came a sound from some about, "Be still!"

Heedless, as one begrimed with blood and smoke,
The leader of a charge shattered in rout,
Strips off his tatters and bids the ranks re-yoke,
And leads them back to carry the redoubt,
So was he, strong once more, and resolute.

But, as he moved into the aisle, there rose
Men round him, grim and quiet, and a hand
Firmly upon each arm and wrist did close,
And held him like an engine at command.
He cried: "Loose me! You do not understand!"

"Loose me," he cried, "I, Jesus, come to tell——"
No answer made they, but without a word
Moved him away. Their office they knew well
With the impious outcasts who the good disturb
In their worship of their Queen and of their Lord.

'Twas finished ere we heard him. At the door
They thrust him out, and I, who followed him,
Knowing that he could enter it no more,
Led him away, his faltering steps, his slim
Frail form within mine arm; his eyes were dim.

Out and away from this I gently guided
Through wretched streets I knew. (Is not my blood
Upon their stones?). A few poor sots derided,
But we passed on unheeding, as we could,
Till by a little door we paused and stood.

We entered. 'Twas a chamber bare and small,
With chairs and benches and a table. There
Some six or seven men sat : I knew them all.
I said, "Food, food and drink !" Some did repair
At once, without a word, to bring their fare.

He sat down by the table listless. But
When bread was brought him, water, and red wine,
Slowly his white waste hand he stretched, and put
On to the bread and brake it ; a divine
Smile touched his lips, and on his brow did shine.

They gathered round him with strange quiet glances,
These soldiers of the army Night hath tried,
One spake the question of their countenances—
"Who are you ?" Then he whisperingly replied,
"I, I am Jesus, whom they crucified !"

At that a murmur rang among them all.
There was one man so white he seemed as dead,
Save for his eyes, and when he heard them call :
"Christ, it is Christ," he bent to him his head,
And the thin bitter lips hissed as they said :

"The name of Christ has been the sovereign curse,
The opium drug that kept us slaves to wrong.
Fooled with a dream, we bowed to worse and worse ;
'In heaven,' we said, 'He will confound the strong.'
O hateful treason that has tricked too long !

"Had we poor down-trod millions never dreamed
Your dream of that hereafter for our woe,
Had the great powers that rule, no Father seemed,
But Law relentless, long and long ago
We had risen and said, 'We will not suffer so.'

"O Christ, O you who found the drug of heaven,
To keep consoled an earth that grew to hell,
That else to cleanse and cure its sores had striven,
We curse that name !" A fierce hard silence fell,
And Jesus whispered, "Oh, and I as well !"

He raised his face ! See, on the Calvary hill,
Submissive with such pride, betrayed and taken,
Transfixed and crucified, the prey of ill,
Of a cup less bitter had he there partaken,
He then by God, as now by Man, forsaken !

“ Vain, was it vain, all vain ? ” had mocked him then ;
Now the triumphant gibe of hell had said,
“ Not vain ! a curse, a speechless curse to men ! ”
His great eyes gazed on it. He bowed his head,
Without a word, and shuddered. He was dead !

And when I saw this, with a low hoarse cry
I caught him to mine arms and to my breast,
And put my lips to his that breathed one sigh,
And kissed his eyes, and by his name addressed
My Friend, my Master, him whom I loved best.

“ Jesus,” I whispered, “ Jesus, Jesus, speak ! ”
For it did seem that speech from him must break ;
But suddenly I knew he would not speak,
Never, never again ! My heart did shake :
My stricken brain burst ; I shrieked and leaped awake.

IV

Down in the woodlands, where the streamlet runs,
Close to the breezy river, by the dells,
Of ferns and flowers that shun the summer suns
But gather round the lizard-haunted wells,
And listen to the birds’ sweet syllables—

Down in the woodlands, lying in the shade,
Among the rushes green that shook and gleamed,
I woke and lay, and of my dream dreams made,
Wondering if indeed I had but dreamed,
Or dreamed but now, so real that dream had seemed.

Then up above I saw the turquoise sky,
 And, past the blowy tree-tops swung aloft,
 Two pigeons dared the breeze ecstatically,
 And happy frogs, couched in the verdure soft,
 Piped to each other dreamily and oft.

And, as I looked across the flowery woods,
 Across the grasses, sun and shade bedight,
 Under the leaves' melodious interludes,
 Flowing one way, the blessèd birds' delight,
 I saw her come, my love, clothed on with light !

Flowers she had, and in her hair and hands,
 Singing and stooping, gathering them with words,
 Whose music is past all speech understands,
 But God is glad thereof, as of his birds ;
 I watched her, listening, till I heard the words

Leap from her lips of a bold battle-song,
 The clarion clear that silences the strife.
 She marched exultantly to it along,
 No more a joyous girl, a sacred wife,
 But a soldier of the Cause that's more than life !

O well I knew the song that she was singing,
 But now she gave her music to my rhyme,
 Her rapturous music thro' the wild woods ringing,
 Asserting Truth and Trust, arraiguing Crime,
 And bidding Justice "bring the better time !"

*O Love, sing on, sing on, O girt with light,
 Shatter the silence of the hopeless hours ;
 O mock with song triumphant all the night,
 O girl, O wife, O crowned with fruits and flowers,
 Till day and dawn and victory are ours !*

106 To Queen Victoria in England

From a Verandah

(*Sydney*)

“Armageddon”

O CITY lapped in sun and Sabbath rest,
With happy face of plenteous ease possessed,
Have you no doubts that whisper, dreams that moan
Disquietude, to stir your slumbering breast?

Think you the sins of other climes are gone?
The harlot's curse rings in your streets—the groan
Of out-worn men, the stabbed and plundered slaves
Of ever-growing Greed, these are your own!

O'er you shall sweep the fiery hell that craves
For quenchment the bright blood of human waves:
For you, if you repent not, shall atone
For Greed's dark death-holes with War's swarming graves!

To Queen Victoria in England

An Address on her Jubilee Year

MADAM, you have done well! Let others with praise
unholy,
Speech addressed to a woman who never breathed upon
earth,
Daub you over with lies or deafen your ears with folly,
I will praise you alone for your actual imminent worth.
Madam, you have done well! Fifty years unforgotten
Pass since we saw you first, a maiden simple and pure.
Now when every robber Landlord, Capitalist rotten,
Hated oppressors, praise you—Madam, we are quite sure!

To Queen Victoria in England 107

Never once as a foe, open foe, to the popular power,
As nobler kings and queens, have you faced us, fearless and
bold :

No, but in backstairs fashion, in the stealthy twilight hour,
You have struggled and struck and stabbed, you have bar-
tered and bought and sold !

Melbourne, the listless liar, the gentleman blood-beslavered,
Disraeli, the faithless priest of a cynical faith outworn—
These were dear to your heart, these were the men you
favoured,
Those whom the People loved were fooled and flouted and
torn !

Never in one true cause, for your people's sake and the light's
sake,
Did you strike one honest blow, did you speak one noble
word :

No, but you took your place, for the sake of wrong and the
night's sake,

Ever with blear-eyed wealth, with the greasy respectable herd.
Not as some robber king, with a resolute minister slave to you,*

Did you swagger with force against us to satisfy your greed :
No, but you hoarded and hid what your loyal people gave to
you,

Golden sweat of their toil, to keep you a queen indeed !

Pure at least was your bed ? pure was your Court ?—We know
not.

Were the white sepulchres pure ? Gather men thorns of
grapes ?

Your sons and your blameless Spouse's, certes, as Galahads
show not.

Round you gather a crowd of horrible hypocrite shapes !
Never, sure, did one woman produce in such sixes and dozens
Such intellectual *canaille* as this that springs from you ;
Sons, daughters, grandchildren, with uncles, aunts and cousins,
Not a man or a woman among them—a wretched crew !

* Charles I. and Strafford, *e.g.*

Madam, you have done well ! You have fed all these to repletion—

You have put up a gilded calf beside a gilded cow,
And bidden men and women behold the forms of human completion—

Albert the Good, Victoria the Virtuous, for ever—and now !
But what to you were our bravest and best, man of science and poet,

Struggling for Light and Truth, or the Women who would be free ?

Carlyle, Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Arnold ? We know it—
Tennyson slavers your hand ; Burdett-Coutts fawns at your knee !

Good, you were good, we say. You had no wit to be evil.

Your purity shines serene over virgins mangled and dead.

You wasted not our substance in splendour, in riot or revel—

You quietly sat in the shade and grew fat on our wealth instead.

Madam, you have done well ! To you, we say, has been given

A wit past the wit of women, a supercomputable worth.

Of you we can say, if not “of such are the Kingdom of Heaven,”

Of such (alas for us !), of such are the Kingdom of *Earth* !

Elsie

A Memory

LITTLE elfin maid,
Old, though scarce two years,
With your big dark hazel eyes
Tenderer than tears,

And your rosebud mouth
 Lipping jocund things,
 Breaking brooding silence with
 Wistful questionings !

Like a flower you grew
 While life's bright sun shone.
 Does the greedy spendthrift earth
 Heed a flower is gone ?

No ; but Love's fond ken,
 That gropes through Death's dark ways,
 Almost seems to hear your Voice,
 Seems to see your Face !

Why He Loves Her

YOU ask me why I love her,
 As I love nought on earth ?
 Why I'll put none above her
 For sorrow or for mirth ?
 Though there be others fairer ;
 In spirit, richer, rarer ;
 With none will I compare her,
 Who is to me all worth !

I love her for her beauty,
 Her force, her fire, her youth,
 For kisses cold as duty
 Bespeak not love, but ruth.
 I love her for the treasure
 Of all the rapturous pleasure
 Her love gives without measure
 Of passion and of truth !

To His Love

I love her firm possession
 Of instincts fair and true ;
 Her hatred of oppression
 And all the wrong men do ;
 Her fiery, unflawed purity,
 Her spirit's proud security,
 Defying all futurity,
 And fate and fortune too.

And O, my love, I love you
 For where words faint and fall
 Something in you above you,
 Some mystery magical ;
 Some spell that's past concealing,
 Some influence past revealing,
 Some deeper depth than feeling
 And life and death and all !

To His Love

(With his first book of "Songs")

"MY Sweet, my Child, through all this night
 Of dark and wind and rain,
 Where thunder crashes, and the light
 Sears the bewildered brain,

"It is your Face, your lips, your eyes
 I see rise up ; I hear
 Your Voice that sobs and calls and cries,
 Or shrills and mocks at fear.

"O this that's mine is yours as well,
 For side by side our feet
 Trod through these bitter brakes of hell.
 Take it, my Child, my Sweet !"

To the Emperor William II.

LONDON, May 15, 1889.—“The promised interview with the Emperor William was granted to-day to the delegates from the coal-miners now on strike in Westphalia ; but the audience lasted for only ten minutes. The men asked that the Emperor would inquire into the merits of their case and the hardships under which they suffered. His Majesty replied that he was already inquiring into the matter. He then warned the miners that he would employ all his great powers to repress socialistic agitation and intrigue. If the slightest resistance was shown he would shoot every man so offending. On the other hand, he promised to protect them if peaceable.”—*Cablegram*.

SON of a Man and grandson of a Man,
 Mannikin most miserable in thy shrunken shape
 And peevish, shrivelled soul, is't *thou* wouldst ape
 The thunder-bearer of Fate's blustering clan ?
 Know, then, that never, since the years began,
 The terrible truth was surer of this word :
 “*Who takes the sword, shall perish by the sword !*”
 For mankind's nod makes mannikin and man.
 Surely it was not shed too long ago,
 That Emperor's blood that stained the northern snow,
 O thou King Stork aspiring that art King Log,
 Wild-boar that wouldst be, reeking there all hog,
 To teach thy brutish brainlessness to know
 Those who pulled down a Lion can shoot a Dog.

A Story

(*For the Irish Delegates in Australia*)

DO you want to hear a story,
 With a nobler praise than “glory,”
 Of a man who loved the right like heaven and loathed the
 wrong like hell ?

Then, that story let me tell you
Once again, though it as well you
Know as I—the splendid story of the man they call Parnell!

By the wayside of the nations,
Lashed with whips and execrations,
Helpless, hopeless, bleeding, dying, she, the Maiden Nation,
lay;
And the burthen of dishonour
Weighed so grievously upon her
That her very children hid their eyes and crept in shame away.

And there as she was lying
Helpless, hopeless, bleeding, dying,
All her high-born foes came round her, fleering, jeering, as they
said :
“What is freedom fought and won for?
She is down! She’s dead and done for!”
And her weeping children shuddered as they crouched and
whispered : “Dead!”

Then suddenly up-starting,
All that throng before him parting,
See, a Man with firm step breaking through yon central knot
that gives;
And, as by some dear lost sister,
He knelt down, and softly kissed her,
And he raised his pale, proud face, and cried : “She is not
dead. She lives!

“O she lives, I say, and I here,
I am come to fight and die here
For the love my heart has for her like a slow consuming fire;
For the love of her low-lying,
For the hatred deep, undying
Of the robber lords who struck and stabbed and trod her in the
mire!”

Then upon that cry bewildering,
 Some of them, her hapless children—
 In their hearts there leaped up hope like light when night gives
 birth to day ;
 And, as mocks and threats defied him,
 One by one they came beside him,
 Till they stood, a band of heroes, sombre, desperate, at bay !

And the battle that they fought there,
 And the bitter truth they taught there
 To the blinded Sister-Nation suffering grievously always,
 All the wrong and rapine past hers,
 Of her lords and her task-masters,
 Is not this the larger hope of all as night gives birth to day ?

For the lords and liars are quaking
 At the People's stern awaking
 From their slumber of the ages ; and the Peoples slowly rise,
 And with hands locked tight together,
 One in heart and soul for ever,
 Watch the sun of Light and Liberty leap up into the skies !

That's the story, that's the story
 With a nobler praise than "glory,"
 Of the Man who loved the right like heaven and loathed the
 wrong like hell,
 And with calm, proud exultation
 Bade her stand at last a nation,
 Ire'and, Ireland that is one name with the name of Charles
 Parnell !

114 At the West India Docks

At the West India Docks

(A Memory of August, 1883)

[The spectacle of the life of the London Dock labourers is one of the most terrible examples of the logical outcome of the present social system. In the six great metropolitan docks over 100,000 men are employed, the great bulk of whom are married and have families. By the elaborate system of sub-contracts their wages have been driven down to 4d., 3d., and even 2d. for the few hours they are employed, making the average weekly earnings of a man amount to 7, 6, and even 5 shillings a week. Hundreds and hundreds of lives are lost or ruined every year by the perilous nature of the work, and absolutely without compensation. Yet so fierce is the competition that men are not unfrequently maimed or even killed in the desperate struggles at the gates for the tickets of employment, guaranteeing a "pay" which often does not amount to more than a few pence ! The streets and houses inhabited by this unfortunate class are of the lowest kind—haunts of vice, disease and death, and the monopolistic companies are thus directly able to make profit of their wholesale demoralization by ruthlessly crushing out, through the contractors, all efforts at organization on the part of the men. To see these immense docks, the home of that more immense machine, British Commerce, crowded with huge and stately ships, steamers, and sailers the first in the world, and to watch with intelligent eyes by what means the colossal work of loading and unloading them is carried out ; this is to face a sacrificial orgy of human life—childhood, youth, manhood, womanhood, and age, with everything that makes them beautiful and ennobling, and not merely a misery and a curse—far more appalling than any Juggernaut process of the human holocausts that were offered up to Phœnician Moloch.]

I STOOD in the ghastly gleaming night by the swollen, sullen
flow
Of the dreadful river that rolls her tides through the City of
Wealth and Woe ;
And mine eyes were heavy with sleepless hours, and dry with
desperate grief,
And my brain was throbbing and aching, and mine anguish had
no relief.
For never a moment—no ; not one—through all the dreary day,
And thro' all the weary night forlorn, would the pitiless pulses
stay
Of the thundering great Machinery that such insistence had,
As it crushed out human hearts and souls, that it slowly drove
me mad.

At the West India Docks 115

And there, in the dank and foetid mist, as I, silent and tearless,
stood,
And the river's exhalations, sweating forth their muddy blood,
Breathed full on my face and poisoned me, like the slow,
putrescent drain
That carries away from the shambles the refuse of flesh and
brain—
There rose up slowly before me, in the dome of the city's light,
A vast and shadowy Substance, with shafts and wheels of might,
Tremendous, ruthless, fatal ; and I knew the visible shape
Of that thundering great Machinery from which there was no
escape.

It stood there high in the heavens, fronting the face of God,
And the spray it sprinkled had blasted the green and flowery sod
All round where, through stony precincts, its Cyclopean pillars
fell
To its adamantine foundations that were fixed in the womb of
hell.
And the birds that, wild and whirling, and moth-like, flew to its
glare
Were struck by the flying wheel-spokes, and maimed and
murdered there ;
And the dust that swept about its black panoply overhead,
And the din of it seemed to shatter and scatter the sheeted
dead.

But mine eyes were fixed on the people that sought this horrible
den,
And they mounted in thronged battalions, children and women
and men,
Right out from the low horizon, more far than eye could see,
From the north and the south and the east and the west, they
came perpetually—
Some silent, some raving, some sobbing, some laughing, some
cursing, some crying,
Some alone, some with others, some struggling, some dragging
the dead and the dying,

116 At the West India Docks

Up to the central Wheel enormous with its wild devouring
breath
That winnowed the livid smoke-clouds and the sickening fume
of death.

Then suddenly, as I watched it all, a keen wind blew amain,
And the air grew clearer and purer, and I could see it plain—
How under the central Wheel a black stone Altar stood,
And a great, gold Idol upon it was gleaming like fiery blood.
And there, in front of the Altar, was a huge, round lurid Pit,
And the thronged battalions were marching to the yawning
mouth of it
In the clangour of the Machinery and the Wheel's devouring
breath
That winnowed the livid smoke-clouds and the sickening fume
of death.

And once again, as I gazed there, and the keen wind still blew on,
I saw the shape of the Idol like a Queen turned carrion,
Yet crowned and more terrific thus for her human fleshly loss,
And with one clenched hand she brandished a lash, and the
other held up a cross !
And all around the Altar were seated, joyous and free,
In garments richly-coloured and choice, a goodly company,
Eating and drinking and wantoning, like gods that scorned to
know
Of the thundering great Machinery and the crowds and the Pit
below.

Ah, Christ ! the sights and the sounds there that every hour
befell
Would wring the heart of the devils spinning ropes of sand in
hell,
But not the insolent Revellers in their old lascivious ease—
Children, hollow-eyed, starving, consumed alive with disease ;
Boys and men tortured to fiends and branded with shuddering
fire ;
Women and girls shrieking caught, and whored, and trampled to
death in the mire ;

At the West India Docks 117

Babyhood, youth, and manhood and womanhood that might
have been,
Kneaded, a bloody pulp, to feed the gold-grinding murderous
Machine!

And still, with aching eyeballs, I stared at that hateful sight,
At the long dense lines of the people and the shafts and wheels
of might,
When slowly, slowly emerging, I saw a great Globe rise,
Blood-red on the dim horizon, and it swam up into the skies.
But whether indeed it were the sun or the moon, I could not say,
For I knew not now in my watching if it were night or day.
But when that great Globe steadied above the central Wheel,
The thronged battalions wavered and paused, and an awful
silence fell.

Then (I know not how, but so it was) in a moment the flash of
an eye—

A murmur ran and rose to a voice, and the voice to a terrible
cry :

“Enough, enough! It has had enough! We will march no
more till we drop

In the furnace Pit. Give us food! Give us rest! Though
the accursed Machinery stop!”

And then, with a shout of angry fear, the Revellers sprang to
their feet,

And the call was for cannon and cavalry, for rifle and bayonet.

And One rose up, a leader of them, lifting a threatening rod,

And “Stop the Machinery!” he yelled, “you might as well
stop God!”

But the terrible thunder-cry replied : “If this indeed must be,
It is you should be cast to the furnace Pit to feed the Machine
—not WE!”

And the central wheel enormous slowed down in groaning
plight,

And all the aerial movement ceased of the shafts and wheels of
might,

And a superhuman clamour leaped madly to where overhead

Dirge

The great Globe swung in the gathering gloom, portentous,
 huge, blood-red !
 But my brain whirled round and my blinded eyes no more
 could see or know,
 Till I struggling seemed to awake at last by the swollen sullen
 flow
 Of the dreadful river that rolls her tides through the City of
 Wealth and Woe !

Dirge

(*Brisbane*)

“ A little Soldier of the Army of the Night ”

BURY him without a word !
 No appeal to death ;
 Only the call of the bird
 And the blind spring's breath.

Nature slays ten, yet the one
 Reaches but to a part
 Of what's to be done, to be sung.
 Keep we a proud heart !

Let us not glose her waste
 With lies and dreams ;
 Fawn on her wanton haste,
 Say it but seems.

Comrades, with faces unstirred,
 Scorning grief's dole,
 Though with him, with him lies interred
 Our heart and soul,

Fling out the Flag

119

Bury him without a word !
No appeal to death ;
Only the call of the bird
And the blind spring's breath.

Fling out the Flag

(For the Australian Labour Federation)

FLING out the Flag ! Let her flap and rise in the rush of
the eager air,
With the ring of the wild swan's wings as she soars from the
swamp and her reedy lair.
Fling out the Flag ! And let friend and foe behold, for gain
or loss,
The sign of our faith and the fight we fight, the Stars of the
Southern Cross !
Oh ! Blue's for the sky that is fair for all, whoever, wherever
he be,
And Silver's the light that shines on all for hope and for
liberty,
And that's the desire that burns in our hearts, for ever quench-
less and bright,
And that's the sign of our flawless faith and the glorious fight
we fight !

What is the wealthiest land on earth, if the millions suffer and
cry,
And all but the happy selfish Few would fain curse God and
die ?
What are the glorious Arts, as they sit and sing on their
jewelled thrones,
If their hands are wet with blood and their feet befouled with
festering bones ?

Fling out the Flag

What are the splendid Sciences, driving Nature with a bit of
steel,
If only the Rich can mount the car and the Poor are dragged
at the wheel?
Wealth is a curse, and Art a mock, and Science worse than a
lie,
When they're but the gift of the greedy Thieves, the leeches
that suck men dry!

Nay, brothers, nay! it is not for this—for a land of wealth and
woe—
That we hoped and trusted all these years, that we toiled and
struggled so!
It is not for a race of taskmasters and pitiful cringing slaves,
That our strength and skill raised up happy homes and dreamed
of fearless graves.
It is not for a Cause that is less than for all, that is not for Truth
but a lie,
That we raise our faces and grip our hands, and lift our voices
high,
As we fling out the Flag that friend and foe may see, for gain or
loss,
The sign of our faith and the fight we fight, the Stars of the
Southern Cross!

As the sky above is fair for all, whoever, wherever he be,
As the blessed stars on all shed their light of hope and of
liberty:
So let the earth, this fertile earth, this well-loved Southern
land,
Be fair to all, be free to all, from strand to shining strand!
Let boy and girl and woman and man in it at least be
sure,
That all can earn their daily bread with hearts as proud as
pure;
Let man and woman and girl and boy in it for ever be
Heirs to the best this world can give, happy, fearless, free!

Farewell to the Children 121

*Fling out the Flag! Let her flap and rise in the rush of the
eager air,*

*With the ring of the wild swan's wings as she soars from the
swamp and her reedy lair!*

*Fling out the Flag! and let friend and foe behold, for gain or loss,
The sign of our faith and the fight we fight, the Stars of the
Southern Cross!*

*Oh! Blue's the sky that is fair for all, whoever, wherever he be,
And Silver's the light that shines on all, for hope and for liberty;
And that's the desire that burns in our hearts, for ever quenchless
and bright,*

*And that's the sign of our flawless faith, and the glorious fight we
fight.*

Farewell to the Children

IN the early summer morning
I stand and watch them come,
The Children to the School-house;
They chatter and laugh and hum.

The little boys with satchels
Slung round them, and the Girls
Each with hers swinging in her hand;
I love their sunnny curls.

I love to see them playing,
Rompng and shouting with glee,
The boys and girls together,
Simple, fearless, free.

I love to see them marching
In squads, in file, in line,
Advancing and retreating,
Tramping, keeping time.

122 Farewell to the Children

Sometimes a little lad
With a bright brave face I'll see,
And a wistful yearning wonder
Comes stealing over me.

For once I too had a Darling ;
I dreamed what he should do,
And surely he'd have had, I thought,
Just such a face as You.

And I, I dreamed to see him
Noble and brave and strong,
Loving the light, the lovely,
Hating the dark, the wrong,

Loving the poor, the People,
Ready to smile and give
Blood and brain to their service,
For them to die or live !

No matter, O little Darlings !
Little Boys, you shall be
My Citizens for faithful labour,
My Soldiers for victory !

Little Girls, I charge you
Be noble sweethearts, wives,
Mothers—comrades the sweetest,
Fountains of happy lives !

Farewell, O little Darlings !
Far away—with strangers, too—
He sleeps, the little Darling,
I dreamed to see like you.

And I, O little Darlings,
I have many miles to go,
And where I too may stop and sleep,
And when, I do not know.

Epode

123

But I charge you to remember
The love, the trust I had,
That you'd be noble, fearless, free,
And make your country glad.

That you should toil together,
Face whatever yet shall be,
My citizens for faithful labour,
My soldiers for victory.

I charge you to remember ;
I bless you with my hand,
And I know the hour is coming
When you shall understand :

When you shall understand too,
Why, as I said farewell,
Although my lips were smiling,
The shining tears down fell.

Epode

BEYOND the Night, down o'er the labouring East,
I see light's harbinger of day released :
Upon the false gleam of the ante-dawn,
Lo, the fair heaven of sun-pursuing morn.

Beyond the lampless sleep and perishing death,
That hold my heart, I feel my New Life's breath,—
I see the face my Spirit-shape shall have
When this frail clay and dust have fled the grave.

*Beyond the Night, the death of doubt, defeat,
Rise dawn and morn, and life with light doth meet,
For the great cause, too,—sure as the Sun, yon ray
Shoots up to strike the threatening clouds and say :
I come, and with me comes the victorious Day !*

When I was young, the Muse I worshipped took me,
Fearless, a lonely heart, to look on men.

“’Tis yours,” said she, “to paint this show of them
Even as they are.” Then smiling she forsook me.

Wherefore with passionate patience I withdrew,
With eyes from which all loves, hates, hopes and fears,
Joy’s aureole and the blinding sheen of tears,
Were purged away. And what I saw I drew.

Then, as I worked remote, serene, alone,
A Child-girl came to me and touched my cheek ;
And lo her lips were pale, her limbs were weak,
Her eyes had thirst’s desire and hunger’s moan.

She said : “I am the Soul of this sad day
Where thousands toil and suffer hideous Crime,
Where units rob and mock the empty time
With revel and rank prayer and death’s display.”

I said : “O Child, how shall I leave my songs,
My songs and tales, the warp and subtle woof
Of this great work and web, in your behoof
To strive and passionately sing of wrongs ?

“Child, is it nothing that I here fulfil
My heart and soul ? that I may look and see
Where Homer bends, and Shakspeare smiles on me,
And Goethe praises the unswerving will ?”

She hung her head, and straight, without a word,
Passed from me. And I raised my concious face
To where, in beauteous power in her place,
She stood, the Muse, my Muse, and watched and heard.

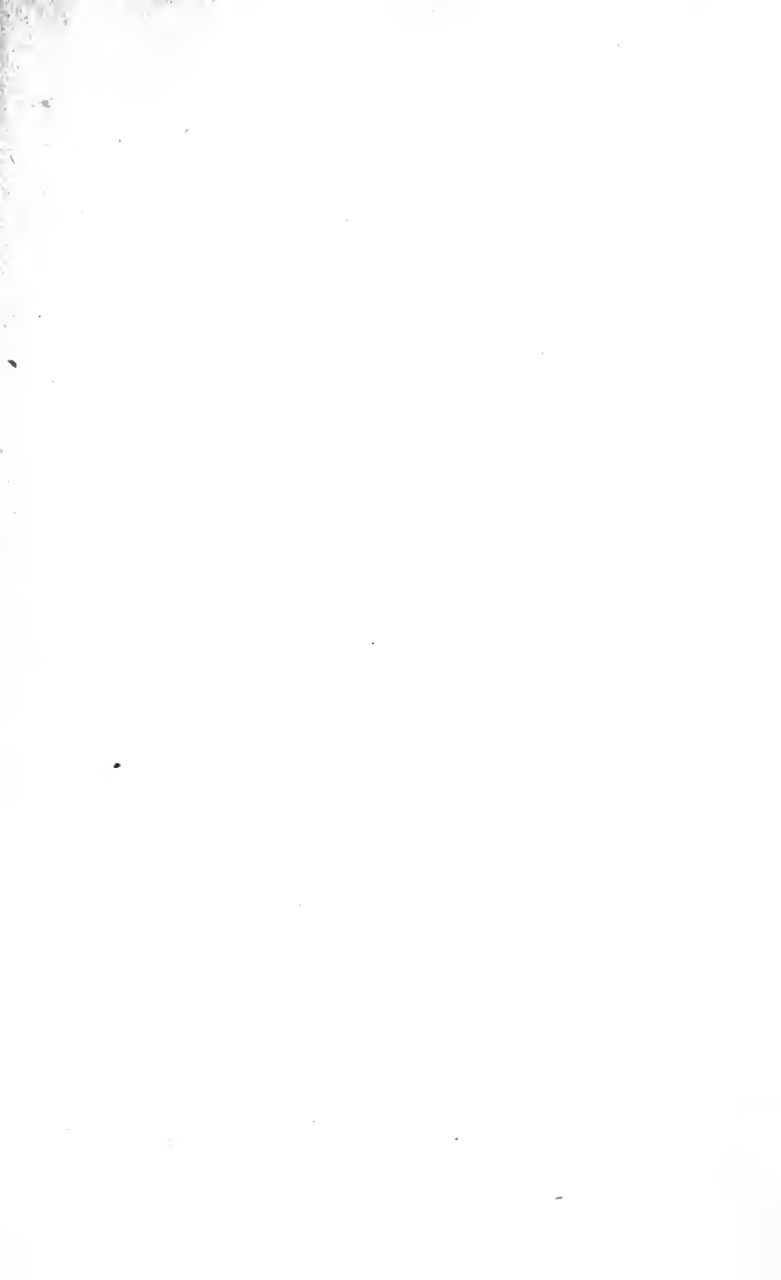
Her proud and marble brow was faintly flushed ;
Upon her flawless lips and in her eyes
A mild light flickered as the young sunrise
Glad, sacred, terrible, serene and hushed.

Then I cried out, and rose with pure wrath wild
Desperate with hatred of Fate's slavery
And this cold cruel Demon. With that cry,
I left her and sought out the piteous Child.

*" Darling, 'tis nothing that I shed and weep
These tears of fire that wither all the heart,
These bloody sweats that drain and sear and smart.
I love you, and you'll kiss me when I sleep ! "*

THE END





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